

# About Garden in Transit

## Overview

Garden in Transit may be the most ambitious community collaboration and public art project in New York City history.

As part of this groundbreaking motivational art, education, and creative therapy project, thousands of kids in schools, hospitals, and community institutions have painted vibrant flowers on adhesive weatherproof panels that will be applied to the hoods, trunks or roofs of thousands of New York City taxis. From September through December 2007, New York City will be visually transformed as the ubiquitous yellow icon becomes a mobile artistic canvas or -- "Garden in Transit."

Hundreds of schools, hospitals and after-school programs throughout the City and beyond have participated in Garden in Transit alongside thousands of adults who have volunteered their time for what Mayor Bloomberg describes as a "mammoth, once-in-a-lifetime effort." The project in its entirety serves as a tangible lesson about the power of teamwork and collaboration. With the launch of the exhibition in September, the taxi will serve as an inspiring tribute to the capacity of kids to achieve the spectacular with millions around the city, nation and world celebrating their achievement.

## Project History

Ed Massey led Portraits of Hope in conceiving Garden in Transit in spring 2000. After initial meetings with the Taxi and Limousine Commission and after the concept began to take shape, Bernie Massey led the team in creating and developing the educational and civic engagement elements for the project. The project was further refined with the Garden in Transit team.

## Program Elements

Through their involvement with Garden in Transit, thousands of kids of all ages participated in educational sessions in which they learned about, discussed, and expressed themselves about current

affairs, community issues, individual and social responsibilities, goals and achievements, and -- the power of teamwork.

In school sessions, participating kids integrated their writing, oral and visual presentation skills to express themselves about those individual and societal issues most important to them. As a group, the students evaluated the importance of 14 contemporary issues inclusive of: the environment, education, senior care, national security, ethnic relations, healthcare, women's equality, medical research, foreign aid, poverty, and animal rights. The students then designed small-scale taxis representing those issues they chose to be a vehicle for. The larger art collaboration -- painting the taxi panels -- was a group effort intended, in part, to demonstrate what people cooperating together are able to accomplish.

For children in hospitals, the project served as creative therapy. Children of all ages and medical and physical conditions had the opportunity to participate with family members, visitors, medical staffs, and hospital and project volunteers. Specialized Portraits of Hope brushes and painting methods were incorporated including telescope paint brushes for children and adults with IVs or in wheelchairs, shoe brushes for children with injured upper limbs or who could not manipulate a brush in their hands, and flavored mouth brushes for those who painted with their mouths. Bedside visits were made to ensure that any child who wished to participate was able to do so.

### **Sponsors**

Garden in Transit is a non-profit privately funded project made possible through the generous support of Helen and Peter Bing, Hotel Pennsylvania and Vornado Realty Trust, MACtac, and Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield among others.

### **Testimonials**

Educators, medical staff, parents, adult volunteers and the children themselves have sent a growing collection of letters related to their experiences with Garden in Transit, and many of those comments are posted at [portraitsofhope.org](http://portraitsofhope.org) or [gardenintransit.org](http://gardenintransit.org).