



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PR- 252-06

July 18, 2006

## MAYOR BLOOMBERG ANNOUNCES GARDEN IN TRANSIT COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT IN HONOR OF 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF FIRST METERED TAXI

“Garden in Transit” Will Travel New York City’s Streets from September – December 2007

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg announced today that "[Garden in Transit](#)," a major community service and temporary public art project, will be displayed on New York City's taxicabs in Fall 2007. The privately-funded project, led by the not-for-profit program Portraits of Hope, will celebrate the 100th anniversary of New York's first metered taxi as part of TAXI 07, a program of the non-profit Design Trust for Public Space in partnership with the [Taxi and Limousine Commission](#) (TLC). Beginning September 2006, school-aged children from throughout the five boroughs, along with thousands of volunteers from corporations and community programs, will paint large, colorful flowers onto decals that will be applied to New York City's iconic yellow taxicabs. The traveling exhibition will take place from September through December 2007.

Portraits of Hope founders Ed Massey and Bernie Massey, Design Trust for Public Space Executive Director Deborah Marton, First Deputy Mayor Patti Harris, TLC Commissioner Matthew Daus, Transportation ([DOT](#)) Commissioner Iris Weinshall, Health & Hospitals Corporation ([HHC](#)) President Alan Aviles, Cultural Affairs ([DCLA](#)) Commissioner Kate Levin, [Parks](#) Commissioner Adrian Benepe, representatives of the Metropolitan Taxi Cab Board of Trade, the League of Mutual Taxi Owners, and the New York Committee for Taxi Safety, cab drivers, and children from participating organizations attended the announcement at City Hall Park in Lower Manhattan.

"From the silver screen to our City's street corners, our yellow cabs are an essential part of the New York experience and our daily life, and now our City's children will have the opportunity to use them as their canvas," said Mayor Bloomberg. "'Garden in Transit' will be a great way for New Yorkers of all ages to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the metered taxi. The mobility of this innovative project is particularly exciting as New Yorkers and visitors across the City will be able to see works created by volunteers, largely children, temporarily adorning one of the City's most iconic symbols - the yellow cab. With our unbeatable cultural and recreational attractions, it's no wonder that visitors are coming here in record numbers. By hosting these kinds of imaginative and inspiring events we are both enhancing our landscape and aiding our economy.

We look forward to this unique installation, and we thank Bernie and Ed Massey for bringing this exciting project to New York City."

"We are thrilled to bring a project of this scale to New York City," said artist Ed Massey. "We are excited that this traveling installation will be showcased throughout this great city on top of the famous yellow cabs, and symbolize the power of kids, community, art and teamwork."

"No other city's taxis are more celebrated or internationally recognized than the yellow cabs that ride the streets of New York City," said TLC Commissioner Daus. "Combining the healing power of art with the talents of enthusiastic children is just a wonderful way to celebrate this milestone year for New York City's iconic yellow taxicabs. We are delighted to receive these beautiful mobile gifts, which will renew focus on our taxicabs on and above our City streets."

"This amazing volunteer opportunity provides a year-long opportunity for children to learn about achievement, service and volunteerism while taking pride in their work as they see it going around our City," said Mayor's Volunteer Center Executive Director Parvizi. "We look forward to working with New York Cares, Children for Children, and other non-profit organizations and City agencies throughout the five boroughs to engage New Yorkers of all ages who want to be a part of this extraordinary project, and celebrate their communities and their love for New York City."

"The iconic yellow taxi cab is the perfect mobile template to display the talents of New York City's youngest artists, and projects like this one remind us all to slow down and appreciate the uniqueness of our urban environment," said DOT Commissioner Weinshall.

The "Garden in Transit" project was approved unanimously today by the TLC's Board of Commissioners. The Board's approval allows for the painting of the panels for the project to commence in September 2006. The painting process will last approximately one year. The installation of the panels will begin in September 2007; a preview of the installation will take place during the New York International Auto Show in April 2007. The installation will be on display for a total of sixteen weeks ending in December 2007. The panels are easily applied and removed and will not damage the taxicabs.

"Garden in Transit" is a dynamic project that will help New Yorkers celebrate TAXI 07, while calling attention to community involvement and hands-on civic engagement by unifying families and communities through public art. The symbol for the "Garden in Transit" program is a flower in an array of vibrant colors. The artwork, consisting of hand-painted panels with garden motifs, will be painted by children from hospitals, schools, recreation centers, and shelters throughout the five boroughs. Drivers of yellow cabs, along with their children and families, are encouraged to be a part of this project by participating in the creation and installation of the artwork, and highlighting the importance of the work that they do. Adult volunteers also will take part in this celebration by aiding with painting and installation of the artwork onto the hoods and roofs of the cabs.

"Garden in Transit" will be one of this City's largest volunteer projects and expansive public exhibitions. Under Mayor Bloomberg's leadership, the City has welcomed public art and events

that encourage New Yorkers and visitors alike to come together and re-imagine public spaces throughout the five boroughs. From free concerts in city parks to Greenmarkets to temporary public art, ranging from displays in City Hall Park to Christo and Jeanne-Claude's "The Gates," there has been an unprecedented revival in major public art events as a means to bring New Yorkers together.

"This wonderful and whimsical roaming exhibit underscores this Administration's enthusiasm for and commitment to public art," said Cultural Affairs Commissioner Kate Levin. "It is also a terrific way to engage New Yorkers in helping to make the City more beautiful, inviting, and inspiring for everyone."

Portraits of Hope was founded by Ed and Bernie Massey in 1995 as a public art, creative therapy and education program for hospitalized and physically disabled children, and has expanded to include a wide array of children and adults who will participate through various community programs and institutions. The program develops public beautification projects for children of all ages, many of whom face medical or socio-economic challenges in their daily lives. For those children who are disabled or ill, Portraits of Hope employs specially designed paintbrushes and tools including shoe paintbrushes, telescope brushes and mouth brushes. The program has completed large-scale projects across the US and internationally, including the largest passenger airship in the country.

"This exciting project will give our budding artists an opportunity to show off their talents while learning about the importance of public art and civic involvement," said Schools Chancellor Joel Klein. "I look forward to seeing students' work on yellow taxicabs throughout the City."

"The city's public hospitals serve more than 300,000 New York City children every year and we welcome the opportunity to bring a fun and therapeutic experience to some of our pediatric patients who are hospitalized, as well as to those who visit our clinics," said HHC President Alan D. Aviles. "We are fortunate to have Portraits of Hope leading this effort since they have particular expertise in bringing the arts to even the sickest children and easily working with patients who have medical and physical limitations."