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Sierra Madre Rose Float Recognized For Colorful Floral Presentation

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Photos by Jim Winburn

For the Sierra Madre Rose Float Association, it was their boundless imagination that caught the Rose Parade judges' attention.

The association's 2013 float entry, "The Sky's the Limit," won the Isabella Coleman Trophy for best presentation of color and color harmony through floral use. The Rose



Parade award is Sierra Madre's 6th one in the last seven years.

Living up to the 124th Tournament of Roses Parade's peppy theme – “Oh, the Places You'll Go!” – the Sierra Madre float seized the moment with the youthful display of a 55-foot long floral kite floating among bluebirds, rainbows and stars.

Sierra Madre's float presented one of the most densely flowered entries in the parade, according to a description provided to parade officials by Kay Sappington, the float's decoration director.

A cloud-streaked sky is suggested by the float's floral arrangement of Dutch Iris, Cattleya Orchids and white roses. A synchronized palette of color was also made possible by the parade float's velvety red and royal purple carnations, yellow chrysanthemums, lime green Kermit Mums, tangerines and limes.

In addition, textural accents were created by ti leaf, coconut flakes, blue statice, red lentils, strawflower confetti, tangerines and limes.

The Sierra Madre Rose Float Association is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization that funds its float completely through fundraisers and private donations. Members of the association voted to construct the float concept in February 2012.

Sierra Madre's float was designed by Charles Meier and was inspired by an idea submitted by Maria Murray and Kait Walsh.



Photos by Jim Winburn







After designing many award-winning floats for Sierra Madre, Charles Meier started a new float-building company, Paradiso Parade Floats. Out of gratitude for Sierra Madre's years of love and support,

Meier volunteered to help the association with the development of this year's design from his gratitude for Sierra Madre's many years of support. It is this kind of warm and family environment that has created a "welcoming atmosphere for volunteers of all ages," according to a statement by the association.

Sierra Madre's independent float operation consists of a core group of 11 people, who do most of the work throughout the year – all preparing for the many volunteers to show up the final week to help apply the flowers.



In this annual tradition, the Sierra Madre Rose Float Association designs, builds, decorates and completely funds the community's parade entry. Sierra Madre's long tradition in the parade dates back to 1917, and the city has had a float entry every year since 1957.

As princesses of the Sierra Madre Rose Float Association, Aliya Crochetiere, Kaitlin Liston and Megan Perley, all road on the tail of the kite in the Rose Parade on Tuesday. The three ladies also serve as community ambassadors in their role as princesses, representing the Rose Float Association before the Sierra Madre City Council and local service organizations and clubs.

Parade officials anticipated a turnout of more than 700,000 people, and those in attendance believed the event easily drew an estimated one million spectators.

The 124th Tournament of Roses Parade included a lineup of 42 floats, 23 bands, and 21 equestrian units, all of which received cheers and applause from viewers along the 5-and-a-half mile parade route along Colorado Boulevard.

Dr. Jane Goodall, DBE, the world famous primatologist and animal welfare advocate, served as Grand Marshal of the 2013 Tournament of Roses while riding in a horse-drawn carriage covered with roses and ferns. According to Tournament of Roses President Sally Bixby, Dr. Goodall provided inspiration for this year's theme.

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"We think Dr. Goodall's life story is a testament to the sense of adventure and openness to possibility that this phrase suggests: As a young woman, she defied convention to follow her dreams, and she has committed herself to a life of global citizenship, inspiring children and adults alike along the way," said Bixby.

This year's Rose Queen is 17-year-old Pasadena native and high school student Vanessa Manjarrez. Having presided over the annual celebration each year since 1930, the queen and Rose Princesses are selected in a month-long process from hundreds of local women between the ages of 17 and 21 to participate as a member of the Royal Court.

Float preparation is one of the greatest challenges of the Rose Parade. And the average cost of a float can be several hundred thousand dollars in what amounts to a high-visibility experience. Media sources have put the number of Americans who watch the Rose Parade on television at 39 million people, while claiming hundreds of millions more view the event from 220 countries around the world.

