

WILLOW HILL NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS FOR YOU

# THE ALLSTON-BRIGHTON TAB

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## Clinic honored for leadership in children's health

By Linda Rosencrance  
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**M**ore Boston children have been immunized against childhood diseases by age 2 than children anywhere else in the country, according to information released recently by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta.

In recognition of that achievement, the Joseph M. Smith Community Health Center in Allston was honored by the state on April 24 for its part in helping the city achieve an 87 percent immunization rate for children ages 19 months and 35 months. The national goal of the CDC is to achieve a 90 percent immunization rate for newborns to 2-year-olds by the year 2000. It is recommended that children receive immunizations against nine diseases — measles, mumps, rubella (German measles), diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, Hepatitis B, polio and Haemophilus Influenza, which causes meningitis.

The most recent statistics released by the centers, covering the period from April 1994 to March 1995, reported an average immunization rate of 75 percent for other states.

"We were one of three neighborhood health centers in the city — the others are in Roslindale and Roxbury — to reach over 90 percent immunization rates for our children," said Carla Bennett, director of development and public affairs for the Health Center. "One of the main reasons for

this is because our providers stress the importance of immunization for newborns and children. The staff tracks the children and then follows up with the families when the children need another shot. About 300 of the center's children are up-to-date on their immunizations."

During the annual National Childhood Immunization Awareness week held April 21-27, Bennett said the Joseph Smith Health Center held a party in the courtyard in front of the building for all of the children under age 10 who had received all their vaccinations.

"People ask why was Boston first in the nation, but I say why not Boston," Bennett said. "We have a computerized information tracking system we use to identify which patients may need shots. But the system is only as good as the people who do the tracking."

Bennett said sometimes in a diverse community like Allston-Brighton it is difficult to track the children because they come from an under-insured and under-served population. However, the Joseph Smith is successful, she said, because the staff is dedicated to making sure immunizations are up to date.

The Joseph M. Smith Community Health Center, located at 51 Stadium St., Allston, offers comprehensive medical and dental services to individuals and families living in the Allston-Brighton community and surrounding areas. □



## Work of art

At a party held recently at the Joseph Smith Community Health Center, Erica Urquiza had her face painted by Shannon Tegan. The party was held to celebrate the center's achievements — it was recently rated number one in the city for immunizing children.