



CITY OF BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
Office of the Mayor
Thomas M. Menino

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2006 Mayor's Award for Excellence in Children's Health Awarded to the Allston-Brighton Family Network

Partnership between City of Boston, Children's Hospital and the Harvard School of Public Health awards \$10,000 to program that supports the healthy development of children.

The city's top award for supporting the health of children will go to a community program for its work in supporting the developmental needs of Allston-Brighton's youngest children. The award, the **Mayor's Award for Excellence in Children's Health**, was presented today at a press conference to the Allston-Brighton Family Network.

"Tending to the health and well being of our youngest Bostonians is so important," Mayor Thomas M. Menino said. "We know that a kid's best hope in reaching his or her full potential is to get the best possible start in the first five years of life. The Allston-Brighton Family Network is a beacon of hope in a time when these types of programs never seem to get the support and recognition that they deserve. I am so pleased to join our partners in making this award," the Mayor Menino said.

The Mayor's Award for Excellence in Children's Health is an annual award given in partnership with the Office of Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino, Children's Hospital Boston, and the Harvard School of Public Health.

The Allston-Brighton Family Network (ABFN), a program of the Family Nurturing Center of Massachusetts, has been providing outreach and support to hundreds of parents and young children in the Allston-Brighton neighborhood of Boston -- many of whom are underserved and at risk of social isolation.

The ABFN supports the physical, cognitive, social, emotional and creative development of children; it also provides education and support to parents through its many programs and services. Through its *Welcome Baby Program*, a trained outreach

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worker visits parents with newborns, providing them with parenting information and resources. *Parent/Child* and *Parent/Baby Playgroups* educate caregivers on child development, increase school readiness of children and connect caregivers to one another and to the community. The ABFN also coordinates *Family Literacy classes*, *Nurturing Programs*, *Infant Massage* and many other activities that both educate and bring families together. The organization also provides access and referrals to resources throughout the area, including Early Intervention, local health care services, WIC nutritional programs, and passes for libraries and museums.

“Children's Hospital Boston is pleased to join with our Mayor’s Award partners in honoring the great work of the Allston-Brighton Family Network,” said James Mandell, MD, Children's President and Chief Executive Officer. “We have seen first hand what a positive impact their high quality playgroups make on young children and their families. Organizations like this exemplify Children’s mission of improving the health of children, families and communities.”

"Supporting early childhood interventions has been a long term focus of the Harvard Center for Society and Health," said Migs Woodside, chair of the Center's Advisory Council. "We applaud the Allston- Brighton Family Network for their work to promote public health by decreasing health disparities in the communities and neighborhoods they serve, and to improve the lives of children and families."

“Parenting is hard work and all families need support,” said Matt LiPuma, Executive Director of the Family Nurturing Center of Massachusetts. “In giving this award to the Allston-Brighton Family Network, the City and two of its most prestigious health institutions are validating the notion that supporting families early in their development will have significant impact on health and education outcomes. We are thrilled to receive this award on behalf of the families and community partners who work together to make Allston-Brighton a great place to raise a family,” added Mr. LiPuma.

About the Mayor’s Award for Excellence in Children’s Health

Each year, the Mayor’s Award for Excellence in Children’s Health promotes best practices by honoring a community group that best improves the health of children in Boston with a \$10,000 prize provided by Children’s Hospital Boston. The Harvard Center for Society and Health at the Harvard School of Public Health helps to organize the selection process and awards ceremony. This year the Mayor’s Award focused on programs that promote the early development of children, particularly the 0-5 age group. The mission of the Award is to bring together the City and major child health institutions to connect public health research and clinical practice expertise with Boston's priorities for children’s health.

Past recipients of the Mayor’s Award for Excellence in Children’s Health have included: The Food Project, Bridge Over Troubled Waters, Casa Myrna Vazquez Shelter for Battered Women and Children; Crittenton Hastings House for school programs for teen parents; Horizons Unlimited, a preschool program for homeless children; Bowdoin St. Health Center for de-leading backyards and the Gardner School for contributing to the mental health of students and their families.

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