



'Beantown Dreams,' a brightly painted mural, will be unveiled next week at the Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County. The mural -- a project that involved local artists, students, and volunteers -- showcases familiar sights in and around Boston. (Globe Staff Photo / Esdras M. Suarez)

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'Beantown Dreams' showcases city sights

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For local artist Tova Speter, it's more than another item on her laundry list of artwork throughout the city. It's a welcoming, panoramic picture of Boston for visitors at the Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County.

In the hallway of the former school building on Commonwealth Avenue, "Beantown Dreams," a bright 42-by-7-foot mural showcases sights from around the city, including Fenway Park and the Zakim-Bunker Hill Bridge. The mural, with 20 other pieces of artwork, is set to be unveiled next Wednesday at the Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County. The center is where abused children and their families benefit from public and private resources to help minimize the trauma of abuse.

"These images . . . make our space more comfortable, more homey. It puts [children and family members] at ease and sometimes creates something to talk about when walking down the hallways with family members or someone who works here," said Susan Goldfarb, director of the center.

The project started in January when Speter organized a session in which community members, volunteers, and staff brainstormed on a theme.

They decided that calming, peaceful and local scenes would best suit the center. Twice a week for six weeks, students from the neighboring Media and Technology Charter High School and staff members met with Speter and other local artists from The Art Connection in Boston to design, sketch, and paint.

"The artistic process . . . can really change a person's mood, can change a person's day," Speter said. "It's one thing to work with artists on a mural, but to work with community members . . . to show them they have the talent and strength to work on a project like this is really exciting."

With the help of a grant from the New England Foundation of the Arts, the mural is the first of three to be completed. The other two, one at Roxbury Youthworks and the other at Newton Community Service Center, are scheduled to be unveiled later this year.

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