

## KeyBank Awards Sara Holbrook Community Center Grant for New Arrivals Program



Leisa Pollander- Dir. of the Sara Holbrook Community Center, accepts a check from Leslie Blount - of KeyBank, for the New Arrivals Program (standing right - left). Seated at the table are children at the SHCC's pre-school working on Mother's Day cards. *photo by Cliff Cooper*

The Sara Holbrook Community Center announces a special \$2,000 grant from KeyBank to help fund the Center's New Arrivals program. Since 1989, the Sara Holbrook Community Center has offered New Arrivals, an educational program for immigrant and refugee children with limited English proficiency. The program provides English language instruction to children while public schools are closed, alleviating the summer slip. Last year, 62 children were enrolled in New Arrivals, representing 15 countries and 19 different languages; nearly half of the children spoke Maay-Maay, the native language of the Somali-Bantu.

Lesli Blount, Director of Community Relations & Public Affairs at KeyBank said, "Our donation recognizes the importance of providing the opportunity for young children, especially those who recently

immigrated to our community, to continue to develop language and social skills through the summer months."

Interestingly, New Arrivals is the only summer program of its kind in Burlington that serves immigrant and refugee preschoolers, ages 3 to 5.

The Sara Holbrook Community Center was established 70 years ago by Sara Holbrook, a clinical psychologist at the UVM. The Center has been providing support and programs for low-income children and their families. Annually, 4,000 individuals, including refugees and immigrants, take part in the Center's programs: preschool, after-school care, teen activities, English classes for adults and children, summer camps, and basic needs assistance. The Center is located at 66 North Avenue in the Old North End of Burlington. *Ed's Note: KeyBank also sponsors the BHS Honor Roll in this paper, Thanks!*