

August 29, 1949

# Hunt Widens For Boy at State School

Scores of men combed hundreds of acres of woods and brush today in an effort to find an 8-year-old Long Island boy who wandered off yesterday afternoon from the Willowbrook State School.

The search started yesterday afternoon on the school grounds, and policemen and hospital workers last night searched a mile-square surrounding area without success.

With the coming of daylight, every available detective on the Island was ordered into the search and plans were made to ask off-duty city workers and other persons to participate in the search.

The youngster was discovered missing about 3:30 P. M. when a group of children was called in from outdoors to wash and prepare for dinner.

Hospital workers started their hunt immediately. The buildings of the hospital were combed twice during the course of the search; nearby Halloran VA Hospital buildings also were examined.

The boy's father, a Long Island City man, had been notified of his son's disappearance a short time after the hunt started and was with the search parties all night.

August 29, 1949

...the hunt for the boy...  
...for the youngster missing at the Willowbrook State School. Most bouquets went to the off-duty firemen who spent hours trudging through the woods. . . Great Kills residents are disgusted with the city's inattention to their reports of insanitary conditions near their homes. It's really becoming a health menace, they report. . . Just want to take it easy some evening? Why not go to Willowbrook Park and watch those model gas planes zip around under the control of their builders?

# Willowbrook School

The project has been extended through March 31, 1950, the committee said, urging agencies which have not participated up to now to register all children known to them by December 31 and to register each new child who becomes known to them between January 1 and March 31.

November 25, 1949

# Willowbrook State School To Expand

WILLOWBROOK State School will as soon as feasible offer all the facilities of a regular state school for mentally defective children, Dr. H. H. Berman, the director, told BETTER TIMES Friday.

He announced also the establishment of a social service department which at present is investigating applications for admission, working with parents of patients, following up former patients and working with social agencies. Eventually the department will be expanded to handle all social service work of the Department of Mental Hygiene on Staten Island, Dr. Berman said. Elizabeth Smith, a graduate of Fordham University School of Social Service, has been appointed senior social worker.

Willowbrook now admits two classes of patients: infants to five years of age on the approval of Dr. Frederick MacCurdy, State Commissioner of Mental Hygiene, and uneducable children five to 15 years of age. Most of the present population of about 800 are infants, he said. The school is starting an occupational therapy program and also school work which will meet the needs of these children as they grow older.

The facilities at Willowbrook are still shared with Halloran Hospital of the VA.

## Registration Extended

The Welfare Council's Committee on Mentally Defective Children Under Five, headed by Judge George Sylvester, which has been active in promoting State care for this group, wrote Friday to selected medical and social agencies concerning its project of registering all mentally defective children under five in need of care in a State institution for defectives. Reviews of the registration, which has been in progress since January, 1948, indicate that returns are still not extensive enough to give a complete picture of this problem, the committee states.

(Continued on page 3)