

Staten Island Advance
June 21, 1954

Senate Group On Visit Today To State School

State Senator John G. MacDonald is accompanying members of the Senate Finance Committee today on its annual inspection of the Willowbrook State School.

State Senator Fred Spreeman, secretary of the finance committee, is directing the inspection tour, which is expected to continue throughout the day.

The legislators were to lunch at the institution, which is under the jurisdiction of the State Department of Mental Hygiene.

STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE
June 25, 1954

Willowbrook In Pilot Study Of Retarded

Dr. G. Orville Johnson, an associate professor of Syracuse University and an expert on the subject of mental retardation, will be in charge of the state Mental Health Commission's pilot study to determine the extent to which severely mentally retarded children can be educated.

The study, made possible through a Legislative appropriation of \$50,000, will extend into Willowbrook State School, where preliminary work of a similar nature has been underway for some time.

The study will be conducted in 12 classes for severely retarded children, with five of the classes under jurisdiction of the state Department of Mental Hygiene at Willowbrook State School and at Letchworth Village. Others will be conducted in public school systems — two in Nassau County and five in New York City schools.

STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE
JUNE 30, 1954

Editorial

Island Will Aid Mentally Retarded

Staten Island will play an important role in the State Mental Health Commission's new pilot study to determine the extent to which severely mentally retarded children can be educated and trained.

The study will be conducted in 12 classes for severely retarded children. Willowbrook State School will be one of the five state schools in the project. Other studies will be made in five New York City and two Nassau County public schools.

The study, an outgrowth of preliminary findings by the commission, was made possible by a legislative appropriation of \$50,000.

The importance of such work was emphasized recently by Dr. Arthur W. Peuse, deputy commissioner of mental hygiene. He noted that over a 33-year period there has been an average annual net increase of approximately 500 persons in our state schools. In the last 12 months, the patient census increased 950 over the preceding year.

This increase is in part due to the admission of younger children (under 5) at all of the schools, but more particularly at Willowbrook. To meet the needs for new patient accommodations, 740 beds for severely retarded children will be added at two other state schools, while provision for 800 additional beds at Willowbrook will be opened to bidding early this fall.

Since the state is providing care for more than 20,000 mentally deficient persons at an annual cost of approximately \$22,650,000, everyone has a share in any project designed to aid the retarded.

Staten Island Advance
July 2, 1954

Union Chief Calls School Head Unfair

The president of an AFL local attempting to organize employees of Willowbrook State School charged last night that Dr. Harold H. Berman, director of the school, is intimidating union members in an effort to break the drive.

Joseph DeGrandis, president of Local 413, Hospital Division of the Retail Clerks International Association, announced dispatch of a telegram to Dr. Berman protesting that Mrs. Jane DeGrandis, wife of the union leader and a school dining room employe, had been discharged.

Copies of the wire, DeGrandis said, will go to Gov. Thomas E. Dewey and to Dr. Newton Bigelow, State Commissioner of Mental Hygiene.

Met with Lawyer

The telegram describes a meeting last Tuesday of Dr. Berman, DeGrandis and William Hainick, the local's attorney, to discuss the union's grievances.

"You promised (at the meeting)," DeGrandis said in the telegram, "that you would not discriminate against any of our members... You asked for my address and then discharged Mrs. DeGrandis."

DeGrandis, calling the organizational drive legal, labeled the release of Mrs. DeGrandis a "violation of labor policies of the state government and of the civil service."

S.I. Advance
July 8, 1954

State School Attendants 7/5/54 Given Raise

Attendants at Willowbrook State School have gotten a raise, Dr. Harold Berman, the school's director, said today.

Annual salaries for attendants now start at \$2,940, with annual increases bringing the salaries up to a maximum of \$3,828. The former starting annual salary was \$2,616, and the maximum, \$3,581.

Notice of the increase was forwarded to the school by the Department of Mental Hygiene in Albany.