

Music Opens New Horizons For Retarded

By DICK OWEN

Dr. Harold H. Berman, nationally known psychiatrist and director of Willowbrook School for Retarded Children on Staten Island, will be one of the principal speakers at next Saturday's 12th annual luncheon at the Waldorf-Astoria sponsored by the Benevolent Society for Retarded Children.

Mrs. Ann Barsky of Brooklyn will be the luncheon's chairman and will have as guests Arthur H. Hayes and Sam Cook Digges of CBS radio.

Band of 40 Youngsters

Featured on the program will be the Willowbrook Band of 40 children, who will furnish entertainment under the direction of Joseph Lombardi, musical director at Willowbrook.

The Benevolent Society is composed of volunteer workers who raise funds to provide the 6,000 inmates at Willowbrook with parties, toys, games and other luxuries the state cannot afford.

The band, which has made several public and television appearances, was created by Dr. Berman, who foresaw that these youngsters, who can't read or write, could be taught to read music. The original plan was worked out by Joseph Lombardi and his brother Vincent, who devised a system of musical notation which the children could understand.

Become Self-Sufficient

As a result of Berman's experiment, many children who formerly appeared to be hopeless have responded to the environment and gone from Willowbrook into the outside world as self-sufficient persons.

The instruments of the band, costing hundreds of dollars, were bought by the Benevolent Society, which collected \$50,000 to give the children a full size carousel. The bands' uniforms were paid for by Willowbrook attendants.

A Party Every Month

Hundreds of Willowbrook children have no relatives and never receive an outside visitor. However, the Benevolent Society makes sure each child is present at a party every month of the year. In addition, the youngsters see movies every week and there are dances, roller skating and similar activities.

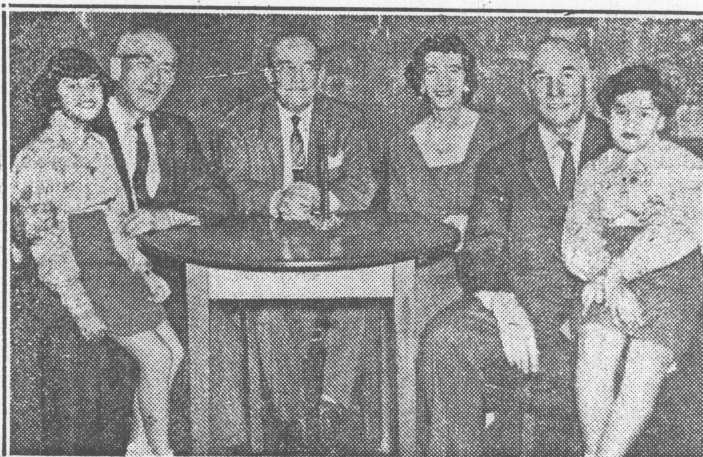
The society has provided sewing machines, furniture and kitchen equipment needed to train the teen-age girls for possible outside jobs.

There are no paid workers in the society. Every penny that is collected goes to the children. As much as \$5,000 is spent at Christmas alone to cheer the

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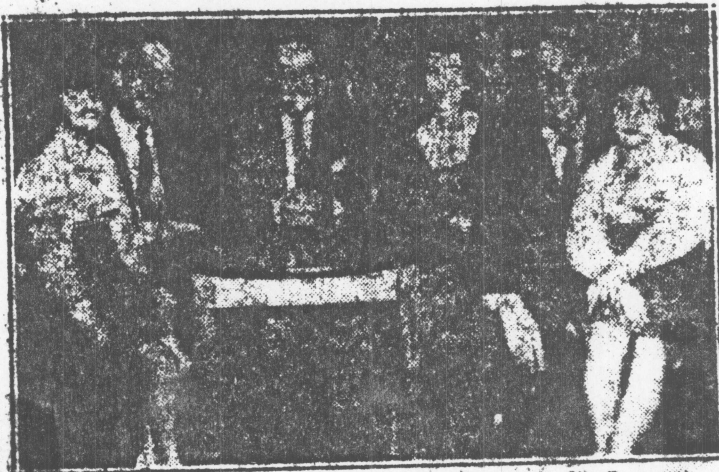
(NEWS foto by Jim Romano)

A couple of youngsters pose with board members of the Staten Island Aid for Retarded Children at the society's headquarters at 1150 Castleton Ave., West Brighton. The center serves more than 50 youngsters. Children receive schooling and occupational therapy and recreation. Posing with the children (l-r) are: Dr. Harold H. Berman, director of Willowbrook State School; Stanley Malachowski, Mrs. Viola Tufte and attorney Jerome O. Ellis. The society is supported by voluntary contributions.

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