

WILLOWBROOK'S CITY OF 6,000

Full Potential of Patients Is Goal of School's Program



ACTIVE PATIENTS—This is typical of the programs which train and help some are taught academic subjects and others are taught to care for themselves.

By ALFRED G. HAGGERTY
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No one is cured at Willowbrook State School — but almost everyone is helped. The exceptions are those patients who are beyond any help.

Everyone else is being trained and urged to reach his or her potential. While the ultimate is to have a patient leave the school and live a normal life in the community, everyone is helped to some extent.

There are academic courses, training programs, rehabilitation, occupational therapy, recreation and a religious program. The community does not have for the child kept at home nearly the facilities available to aid his advancement at Willowbrook.

MENTALLY RETARDED children with cerebral palsy, once thought beyond any help, are taught at Willowbrook to walk, eat, comb their hair and take care of most of their personal needs.

"We don't make anyone smarter," Dr. Frank B. Glasser, acting director, explained. "But we do help them reach their full potential. This can sometimes result in rather remarkable changes."

About 1,000 children at Willowbrook attend classes for the "educable" and "trainable" — 500 of each. Plans are under way to expand the school.

THE PROGRAM for the trainable youngster is under the direction of Nicholas Mammano, while Mrs. Frank Glasser, wife of the acting director, is in charge of the educables.

While the educable program

is aimed at making the child socially and occupationally competent, Mammano said, the trainable program tries to make the child capable of caring for himself.

The educable children are taught language, arts, social studies, arithmetic and vocational guidance. The teachers have the same qualifications as teachers in city schools.

A CLASS includes youngsters of various ages. It meets 2 hours and 15 minutes a day and has about 15 pupils. While a normal child can be taught reading readiness in six weeks, it takes a year with one of these children.

A class of intermediate boys from 14 to 16 years of age have a mental age range of from 7 to 9.

There are additional classes for boys and girls with added handicaps, such as the blind and the deaf. Since creative thinking is stressed at Willowbrook, they are called the right class and the left class.

Some of the latest training, to sing and partially deaf children, are taught the meaning of words. The blind are taught to take care of their personal needs. They also have physical coordination drills, arts and crafts and music.

OLDER GIRLS attend a homemaking class in which they are taught domestic work, including washing, ironing, cleaning, cooking (they eat what they bake) and other chores.

The educable children graduate when they're 17. Their academic learning ends, but their vocational training begins in earnest. They work in various parts of the school under supervision and are taught certain aspects of living in the community. These include shopping, visiting government agencies and meeting people.

Meanwhile, the trainable chil-



LEARNING THE ALPHABET — A class of mildly retarded children at Willowbrook are taught the alphabet with the aid of the latest teaching devices. All teachers in the classes for educable children have the same qualifications as teachers in city schools. The size of the classes is usually limited to about 15.

Educable and trainable children who are crippled and unable to attend regular classes are not left out of the program. Classes are taken to them. Teachers go from building to building holding classes for these youngsters.

ABOUT 600 adult patients at the school live in a special rehabilitation unit. Ranging from toddlers to 8 or 9-year-olds, more work can be done with them, because after sessions in the rehabilitation section of the building, special down jobs by the day in the community. Returning, each ward so that training can continue after regular classes.