

State Youth Division to Make Island Debut

By MARK WIESNER

The State Division for Youth is an agency with a \$7 million budget that will be making its first direct contact with Staten Island in establishing an open facility for delinquent girls in Willowbrook.

Indirectly, the Youth Division has made its presence felt through the activities of the New York City Youth Board. Part of the function of the state agency is to give financial aid to local youth boards.

The Youth Division is an outgrowth of the old State Youth Commission and when it was reconstituted in 1960, it was

given the job of starting youth opportunity and rehabilitation centers, in addition to dispensing state funds.

* * *
THE DIVISION has four camps and three residential homes in operation in different parts of the state. The facility planned for Willowbrook is the fifth Short Term Adolescent Resident Training (START) facility.

It will accommodate 20 girls at a time. Stays will range from four to six months.

A staff of seven will operate the facility to be built on Forest Hill Rd. on a site opposite the home of the director of Willowbrook State

school. The cost of construction will be about \$250,000 and the agency hopes to have the center in operation within a year.

The teen-agers will receive occupational assignments at the state school, Milton Luger, deputy director in charge of rehabilitation for the division, said.

The residents will receive counseling and programs of a religious, recreational nature will be among the means of rehabilitating the youngsters.

Luger stated that the purpose is "to build up their own self respect." He said that most of the time the only attitude they have gotten from

adults is that they are worthless and the program seeks to treat them differently and bring about an "attitudinal change."

A measure of the success of the division's total program—camps, resident and START centers, is that of the 440 youths discharged, thus far, only one of 12 needed further institutionalization, Luger said.

Another measure of success, Luger stated, is that youngsters who have been residents at centers have actually returned to work on the staff of the division.

Though all youths who are referred to START centers have appeared before the court, they are youngsters who are not "dangerous or assaultive," Luger said, "and don't require physical restraint."