

Volunteers, Staff, Patients Join In Luau Fete at Willowbrook

A Hawaiian luau, complete with palm trees, pineapple and flower decorations, grass skirts and leis, was held last evening on the grounds of Willowbrook State School.

Sponsored mainly by employees and volunteers of Building 10, the Hawaiian festival was open to all of the nearly 1,000 Willowbrook patients, many of whom assisted with the preparations.

Patios were strung with lights and lanterns and serving tables were decked out with grass skirts, as two bands in authentic Hawaiian dress provided dance and background music.

The two Island groups, the Wanderers and the Remnants, also provided leis for the pa-

tients as well as table decorations.

Under the general chairmanship of Mrs. William Teichmann, supervisor of Building 10, staff members and patients arranged trays of cut tropical fruits for refreshments, as well as traditional punch and potato chips.

Guests at the festivities included Dr. Jack Hammond, director of the school, and his wife, head of Willowbrook volunteers. Mrs. Hammond noted that the event points out the enthusiasm employees have about their work here.

"The volunteers and employees constantly perform extra services for the patients which the public never hears about," she continued.

"For instance, under our Adopt-A-Patient program, employees visit patients who have no friends or relatives, take them shopping and invite them into their homes for dinner."

DAILY NEWS, THURSDAY, AUGUST 18, 1966

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

WILLOWBROOK REPORT

Manhattan: Your recent editorial requesting release of the grand jury findings on the investigation into conditions at Willowbrook State School for the mentally retarded was of interest to me. However shocking and horrifying the disclosures, if and when released they will come as no surprise to many of us who have recognized the existence of "snakepit" situations at Willowbrook for many years. Some small degree of progress has been made to alleviate the overcrowding. However, the situation remains alarming, as it does at other similar institutions. I sincerely hope your editorial will move the powers that be in Albany to speed implementation of the many new projects presently authorized to correct conditions in this neglected area.

VINCENT J. ANASTASIO,
N.Y. State Assn. for
Retarded Children, Inc.

Staten Island: At Willowbrook, we have four or five attendants to care for about 50 patients per ward, and we work incredibly hard. We're paid \$81 a week as a starting salary. I can assure you this doesn't recompense us for our work. Our rewards are the looks and actions of the patients. You call Willowbrook a "snakepit." I agree there is always room for improvement, but when an institution has almost 6,000 patients there have to be some things we're not proud of. We have an occupational therapy department which is doing wonderful work and volunteers who entertain the patients and take them to ball games, etc. I'm convinced most patients receive better care at Willowbrook than they would in their own homes.

C. D.

Editorials

MONDAY, AUG. 22, 1966

School Overlooked

Even the law of supply and demand doesn't seem infallible.

From time to time, Mr. Fixit, our distinguished colleague on this page, is asked how persons can train to become practical nurses. Persons unable to attend the course given at Curtis High School apparently have some difficulty in getting such training.

And, yet, right on Staten Island, there is a school that not only offers such training without cost but pays the students \$3,000 a year while they learn. It is at Willowbrook State School.

Only two of the 40 students attending the course are Staten Islanders and school officials are anxious to enroll more.

It's an unparalleled opportunity — one that anyone desiring to become a practical nurse certainly should investigate.