

# School-hospital program helps handicapped

By CHRISTINE KEENE  
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Many of the disabled ex- patients on the Willowbrook men working at Staten Island Hospital are former residents of Willowbrook State School, and were initially referred to number of our people to the Willowbrook men, filling jobs as plasterer's helpers and dishwashers.

"The seven Willowbrook people we have working here now is actually a low number for us," said Mrs. Cecil Commalle of the hospital's personnel staff. "We generally average about 10 or 11 permanent employees from Willowbrook."

"Our staff tries for flexibility with our mentally disadvantaged people by giving them plenty of understanding and rotate them to different parts of the hospital to whatever jobs are most suitable for them."

Hospital officials often find that mentally handicapped persons begin in a relatively unskilled position in the maintenance department and soon show an aptitude for more specialized work.

"We have one man who is planning to go to a plumbing school in the fall while a second man developed a good talent for handling audio-visual and equipment," Mrs. Commalle said.

Since the first person from Willowbrook began working at Staten Island Hospital eight years ago, the hospital has taken the place of family counselor and employer for most of its disadvantaged workers.

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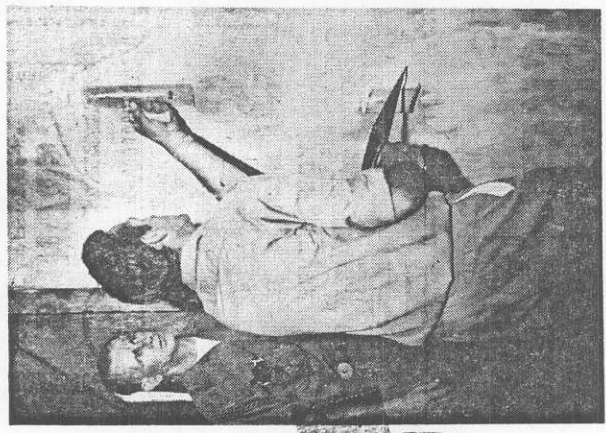
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Another "student" learns plumbing from Joseph A. DiGiovanna, left, while still another on-the-job trainee finds a spot in the hospital's laundry room. Right

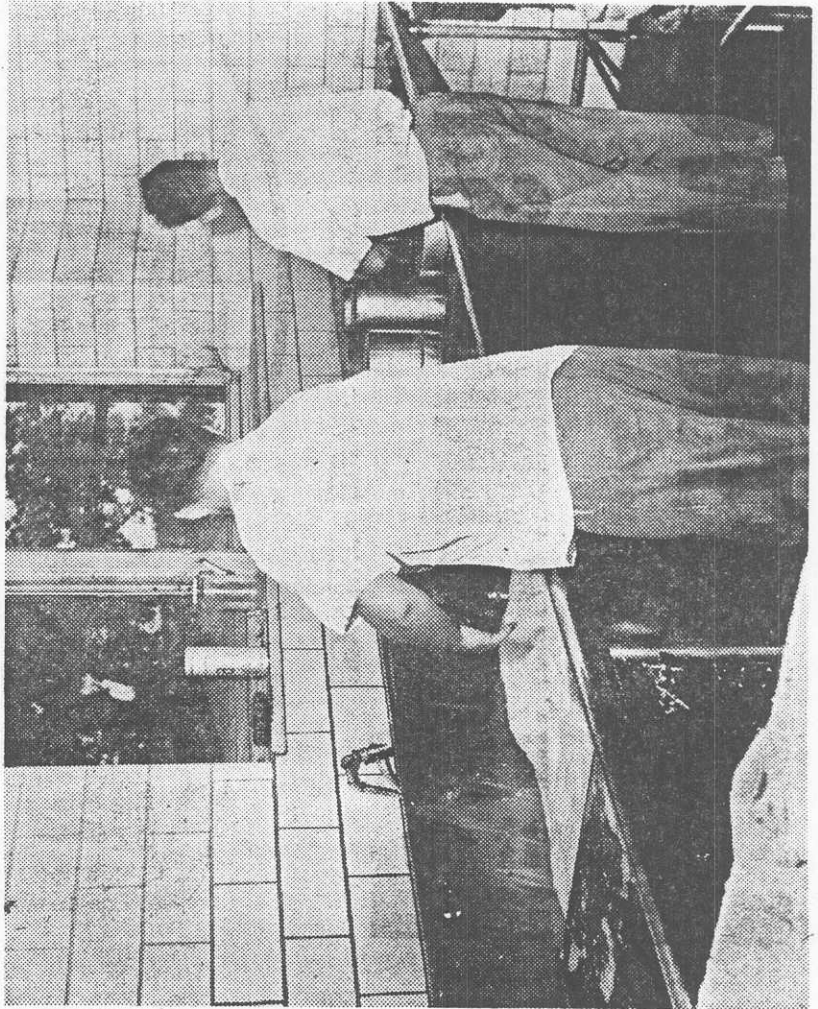


A handicapped employe at Staten Island Hospital receives on-the-job training under the experienced eye of Frank Knapp. Program is a joint effort by the hospital and Willowbrook State School.



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In the hospital kitchen, there's always plenty of work to do as these two trainees learn.  
S.I. Advance Photos by Barry G. Schwartz