

# It's your opinion

Saturday, December 11, 1971

## Scouts to aid at Willowbrook

In spite of all the recent publicity being given to the terrible conditions at Willowbrook State School; good things are going on there as well.

I'm the leader of a Girl Scout troop in Great Kills. The articles in the Advance about Willowbrook led me to think about how our troop might help. However, I, as well as many of the other parents, was afraid that taking the girls into Willowbrook might be very upsetting for them.

Mrs. Hammond, the director of volunteers, took several parents on a mini-tour of the institution. We saw the school building, where small numbers of children were working with teachers who appeared very dedicated. We saw real learning going on in the usual school subjects, and also in sewing, woodworking and the use of office machines.

We also saw a group of younger children who are part of a special program. Mrs. Hammond told us that it had not been expected they could learn to walk or talk. However, as the result of this program, they appeared to me to be acting like the younger children one would find in a nursery school. The buildings that we saw and the children in them were neat and clean.

Our troop is planning to visit these children several times during the year to make parties for them. I think this should be a very good experience both for the children at Willowbrook and for the girls in our troop.

There is an obvious need for the very fine programs we saw in operation to be extended to many more of the people at

Willowbrook, and the current articles are helpful in that regard. However, I hope they don't discourage potential volunteers from helping out.

**MRS. GLORIA HOFFMAN,**  
140 E. Figurea Ave.,  
Eltingville

Monday, December 13, 1971

## Nixon should aid Willowbrook

My name is Tracey Marshall and I am 10½ years old. I have just finished reading about those poor children in Willowbrook. I get very upset when I think about all the money that the government wastes on the war and also sending dollars to all those countries. I think it would be a lot better to spend the money on our own children so they could have more people who could take care of them and teach them how to help themselves. I think all the important people on Staten Island should get together and go and see the President and make him give more money. If President Nixon saw for himself I am sure he would try to help.

**TRACEY MARSHALL,**  
350 Douglas Rd.,  
Emerson Hill

Saturday, December 18, 1971

## Let jury probe Willowbrook

The Advance's articles spotlighted the sordid conditions at Willowbrook. The public rightfully was and is surprised and aroused.

The lasso of blame is being deftly hurled by both political parties against each other. Their maneuvers, however, do not solve the problems at Willowbrook. Something constructively must be done now to restore dignity to the retarded children at Willowbrook.

An impartial investigation can be conducted by the grand jury of this county under the aegis of District Attorney Braisted. The grand jury has the power of subpoena. Its members have no political axes to grind. They represent all economic, social, ethnic and racial groups in this county. The grand jury could

ascertain whether criminal negligence, callous indifference, failure to supply competent or proper personnel, or other reasons have led to the present conditions at Willowbrook. The grand jury's presentment or indictments—if there be any—would prove that justice is not blind but rather is a vibrant humane force in action.

A boiling mad Mr. and Mrs. Citizen demand affirmative, dispassionate and objective inquiry now by the grand jury to ascertain whether Willowbrook really is Staten Island's "Snake Pit."

**HAROLD L. COWIN,**  
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