

February 23, 1972/ADVOCATE

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Save The Willowbrook Children!

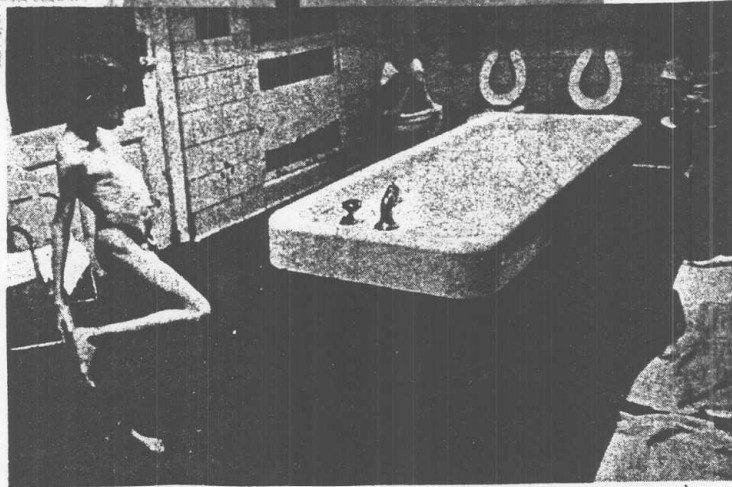


Horrors of Willowbrook Exposed

Due to the series of articles by Jane Kurtin in the "S.I. Advance," the organizing of parents by Willowbrook employees, Dr. Mike Wilkens and Mrs. Elizabeth Lee, the public became aware of what was going on at Willowbrook. In 1966 Robert Kennedy brought conditions at Willowbrook to light and after his election as Senator poured money into the institution. Money couldn't alleviate the problems there, however.

Last year money was cut back from the State schools (38 million) and this brought much protest from parents. After much public exposure to atrocious conditions at Willowbrook, Governor Rockefeller "found" more money to give to the state schools (25 million). It is agreed by all that money is certainly needed to hire more help, start meaningful programs for the inhabitants of Willowbrook, retrain the existing staff and train new ones, and rebuild much of the institution.

The conditions of, and what it's like being a Willowbrook, we will not get into here (see "Advocate" Magazine which will be out by March 1st). Everyone gets the idea that more money should be poured into the school and other state schools. Some of the parent groups along with Drs. Mike Wilkens and Bill Bronston (still practicing at Willowbrook), and both members of the Coalition For a Family Hospital at Public Health Hospital, say that money is not enough. They believe that the schools for the mentally retarded



This is just one of many pictures of horror depicting the depressing conditions of the State mental institutions.

should not be placed under the State Department of Hygiene. Furthermore, both Wilkens and Bronston think that both the parents of the patients and the workers there should have final say in decisions regarding the children and not the administration which is responsible only to Rockefeller, not the patients, parents or workers.

Dr. Bronston, on the Dick Cavette television show, questioned why Rockefeller could build a 1.5 billion dollar mall in Albany and the World Trade Center, "firetraps", and not help suffering human beings.

Many Staten Islanders are also

asking when were our politicians, like John Marchi, Lucio Russo, John Murphy and Bob Connor, for the last few years, "you mean they didn't know about Willowbrook" says one Islander. Assemblyman Edward Amann even turned down a request on an hearing concerning Willowbrook. In Dr. Hammond's plush office he poured all the blame on the state for lack of finance and absolved himself of any guilt. Many of the parents of patients raided his office and told him and ABC News differently.

On February 5, both Dr. Wilkens and Mrs. Lee were denied an ap-

Both, they feel, are guilty only of speaking out against oppression at the facility. On February 5, a rally was held at Willowbrook, by parents and supporters, only approximately 250 showed up. The light turnout was blamed on the freezing weather.

A Willowbrook Concert will be held at SICC on March 4, 1972 at 7:30 p.m. sponsored by the Hey Brother Coffee House, Kaleidoscope, and "Advocate". Pete Seeger is expected to come and Dr. Wilkens will speak about Willowbrook and what students and the community can do.

The Jewish Community Center at Victory Boulevard and Forest Avenue is holding a forum on Willowbrook with parents, doctors and administrators attending, the only such meeting since the crises began. It will be on February 22, 1972 in the evening.

(Advocate Magazine will have an interview with a Willowbrook patient as well as an article by a parent of a patient on changing the institution and what students can do.)

Support Wilkens & Lee

Dr. Mike Wilkens and Mrs. Elizabeth Lee have been fired from their jobs at Willowbrook. It was these two that first brought the horrors of Willowbrook to public attention by calling "The Advance" and ABC News in. Obviously the Willowbrook administration fired both of them for speaking up (very evidently speaking the truth is becoming a "crime" in America, today!)

We demand that both Dr. Wilkens and Mrs. Lee be reinstated at their former jobs. Both are jobless and becoming increasingly penniless. Neither are opportunists like those politicians who came and gave speeches and got T.V. time, and then split.

The issues at Willowbrook are both political and human. The parents whose children are at the institution and the workers who work there should have

final say on what goes on at the place. The administration must provide proper education for the workers, parents and children so all can fight the problem of mental retardation.

Many of the people at Willowbrook don't belong there (Bernard Carabello is one example, See "Advocate" magazine coming soon). Why not let some of these people come to SICC and learn, for free. One such former patient is doing so now with the help of the Tutoring Center and other concerned students. The Community College should serve the community. Let's get it on!

Anyone interested in the Willowbrook problem can come to "Advocate," room C-105 or get in touch with Mike Wilkens at the Coalition for a Family Hospital.

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