

# staten island REGISTER

Staten Island Register, March 9, 1972

## Willowbrook

### City within a City Part II

Three weeks ago the first extensive look into the city of 7,000 plus that is Willowbrook State School was run. This week "education" as practiced at the school is reviewed. Read it on page two. (Clarke)

### Education in the City

Willowbrook is called a "school" by the State. Some feel it is a school in the way State insols are "rehabilitation" centers. Find out why on page two.

### The Curriculum Guide

What are Willowbrook children trained for in school? Find out on page ten.

### The School System

A review of the mechanics behind the "system" of education at Willowbrook. Read it on page ten.

# The School system

**BUILDING** building houses the administrative staff for the educational program at Willowbrook. There are three parts to this old building which serve as the school chapel, auditorium and in the basement, the community store. Two new wings connect to the old stone structure via a series of passageways.

There are approximately 32 classrooms in use in building 3. The breakdown is as follows: 3 for educables, 16 for trainable, 1 for home economics, 1 for shops, 1 for sewing, 1 for audio-visual; a library; 3 rooms for the blind; ERE room (talking typewriter); 1 for typing and office practice; 1 for speech and hearing.

While touring the school this reporter upon entering the audio-visual room, noted that there were at least a dozen rolls of un-used motion picture film in the cabinet. When the instructor was asked what types of movies are made he replied "none." Mrs. Glasser then stated that there were some training films done. An ex-employee claims "they used the audio-visual equipment to make promotional films for the school."

Building +3 was opened as a school around 1950, however, it was not constructed to deal with the crowded conditions which have haunted the school for the last 20 years. Even with the addition of the two wings there is not enough room to house all the students now in Willowbrook. Classroom sizes may reach 15 students per teacher. Miss Hallohran says that it "depends on the response of the child." She continues, "with the blind you cannot have a ratio above one to one in the shops...with the other children you can have a higher ratio."

Spastic children cannot be brought to building +3 because the bathroom doors are not wide enough to get wheel chairs or spastic carts through. Miss Hallohran spoke of the possibility of the spastic and the physically weak child catching cold if they are brought out to building +3. However, two teachers working in the basement of a ward building claim "at times it becomes so cold you can't teach. The alternatives are narrowed when it comes to finding decent and available classroom space."

**THE BASEMENT CLASSROOM.**...Classes in the buildings are mostly for the student classified as trainable. There are only two buildings with educable classes (10 & 11). Building 10 is a male building with many 'Downs Syndrome' students over 12. Building 11 is a Cerebral Palsy unit for females with IQ's 58 and higher. In addition, there are blind students with Cerebral Palsy who have classes in their building. Buildings 13, 15 and 27 are units which also house students with Cerebral Palsy. Buildings 6, 8, 21, 27 and 23 hold only

trainable classes. In addition, buildings 27 and 29 which house spastic students use classroom time primarily for physical therapy and for the advanced student occupational therapy.

Class size in the basement school is regulated by the type of student and his handicap. For instance, the spastic student must be kept down to 4 a class. A teacher may see an average of 12 students a day for just over an hour. The reason given for the small class size is that the spastic student must remain in the special cart and room becomes a problem.

Many students are kept out of the formal class setting in building +3, states Miss Hallohran, because they are not toilet trained. "We keep them in the buildings until they can go to the bathroom," she claimed. Dr. Hammond in an interview in the Jewish Community Bulletin stated, "60% of the residents were not toilet trained."

Efforts are many in the classroom and wards to train the resident to control himself. Teachers state that, "with the shortage of ward staff we can not move very fast in getting these students into building 3." Dr. Hammond continues, "There are new techniques that might help some of the patients. But these techniques are very controversial and still unproved."

### STAFF PATTERNS.

As of January, 1972 the Willowbrook budget allows for 8 supervisors; 94 or 95 professional teachers; 1 teacher assistant in the education department. Mrs. Glasser's assistant explains how they used the 40 teacher assistant slots and the 2 additional teachers budget in the Title I program to supplement the regular teaching staff.

A Title I proposal was written to provide a year round program states Mrs. Glasser, "to enrich the program we already have." "In addition, the grant provides for a summer school program and teachers are hired from this grant money."

Occupational Therapists, numbering 36.5; Physical Therapists, numbering 16; Speech and Hearing Instructors, numbering 5; Recreational Therapists, numbering 38.3 make up the total number of persons who take part in the programmatic learning experience of the student.

Ward attendants, who have since 1967 been given the duty of motivating the students (toilet training - personal grooming, etc.) are officially considered a part of the learning experience of the student.

However, the Educational Department does have control of the abovementioned people as one department. When Mrs. Glasser was asked if she as Educational Director could coordinate all of the programs

she replied, "surely I can coordinate, but this is a big job that I am doing here. Just running this program is a job in itself."

The total number of people who work with the student in a formal program directed towards the educational experience is officially 207.8. A former employee states, "there is no co-ordination under one department - they have no interaction."

Ernest Maddock in his report on education for the "Training Bulletin," (August, 1971) states - "In the institutional setting, instructional and training services are the responsibility of the Departments of Recreational Therapy rather than a single Department of Education."

### Mrs. Glasser speaks of the proposed plan to provide a

unit system for Willowbrook. Well, they plan to take one or two buildings that are similar and make that a unit, so to speak - having in that unit, your doctor, your psychologist, your educator, your O.T. and that is a unit in itself. There is a budget problem - you see, if you had a psychologist, you would need one just for that unit. Teachers, you might need ten per unit. So, it comes down to money and priority."

When a teacher leaves, Mrs. Glasser explains, she doesn't have the freeze problem in replacing an employee. "Albany," she states, "requires us to keep our staff at 90% efficiency. When I need a teacher I must let them know and they okay it. Now with my Title I, I can hire without permission - so that eases my problems."

### STAFF CREDENTIALS.

All teachers at Willowbrook are regulated by the State Department of Education. In 1970, a Career Ladder program for the Education Department was instituted by the state.

Mrs. Hallohran explains the new specifications. "Before the 'Career Ladder' we could hire a teacher who did not have a certificate with elementary experience and they would be given two years to get the necessary requirements. Now, she explains, you cannot be hired without the New York State Elementary Education Certificate."

The following outline describes the grade levels from 12 to 24:

- GRADE 12 - requires a Provisional New York State Elementary Education Certificate;
- GRADE 15 - requires a provisional Certificate plus 30 graduate credits, or 12 special hours of instruction;
- GRADE 17 - requires a Masters Degree and a permanent certification including 30 credit hours above the requirement for grade 15 and the master level for

**GRADE 18** - requires a permanent teacher 4 (grade 17) for two years with 9-12 credit hours in administration, and must have passed the Civil Service exam for this position - in addition, names are taken from the Civil Service List.

Willowbrook is only allocated eight supervisory positions as noted in the budget of January 1972.

GRADE 21 - Education Director requires a provisional principal and supervisory certificate ... with one year permanent service in the supervisory grades 18.

All of the above information was given by the Personnel Department at Willowbrook.

In December 1970, the State Education Department instituted a Career Ladder program which gave the qualified teachers with permanent status an automatic upgrading.

When asked for the changes in specifications the Willowbrook - Personnel Department stated that they could not authoritatively say what changes were made because they have yet to get the correct specifications.

Mrs. Glasser did provide the information concerning the changes in specifications. "All grade 18 who are in a permanent item were automatically upgraded to 19 without change in the following specification: One year permanent service as a senior instructor teacher or vocational instructor (teacher 4), a provisional principal certificate with 6 graduate or undergraduate credit hours and three years in parentetic specialty."

Mrs. Glasser was asked if her position had changed under the Career Ladder. "Yes, I was a grade 21 and the career ladder upgrade placed me in grade 24. The grade 22 stipulates that a director supervise 70 staff, an institution with a staff above 70 carries a grade 24 which I am." Mrs. Glasser was asked if the provisional principal certification changed to a permanent certification. "No, all Specifications before 1970 remained as they were." She added that she did not have a permanent certification, "mine is provisional."

### STUDENT POPULATION

... State requirements for placing retarded children into education groups depend on the IQ level. Students with IQs above 50 are classified as educable ... below 50 as trainable.

Mrs. Hallohran explains that all this means is the educable child can learn the academic subjects (i.e. reading, writing). The trainable child will be taught the self-help skills and social habits are stressed.

Miss Hallohran quoted from the February monthly report which gives the number of students and what classes they are in. "In February there were 987

students enrolled this includes Building 2 and the out-building. For the whole institution there were seven educable classes, seven trainable, six blind, five deaf, 17 Cerebral Palsey and the five H.I.P. classes were included."

She explained that with the blind, C.P. and multiple-handicapped the class size is kept to a minimum, depending on the students physical ability. She cited the blind as an example, where in Building 3 the class size is eight.

Mrs. Glasser gave the numerical breakdown by student for January and the class title. "Educable 97, trainable 725, blind 42, Hearing 31, Cerebral

Palsey 108, Vocational Training 269, Home Making 171, Sewing 167, ERE 24, on-the-job training 69; 50 males, 19 females, night classes 180." She explains that the figures include students who attend more than one class - so the correct total for January was 1,005.

Miss Hallohran stated that some students (she did not give the number) had gone on to the state sponsored Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. This is a program that strengthens the vocational skills of students, and is funded by the State Department of Education.

"Since 1943, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation of the New York State Department of Education has provided direct services to mentally retarded individuals over 14 years of age, who are able to benefit from counseling and training, and to enter into competitive, sheltered or home employment." From, A Plan for a Comprehensive - Mental Health and Mental Retardation Program for New York State, Volume 1, 1965.

**BUDGET** ... When the business office at Willowbrook was asked what part of the allocation went to the education department for materials and supplies, Mr. Delaney replied, "there is no separate budget - it is lumped in with the other departments."

Mrs. Glasser explained, "the title 1 enriches the already existing program, that is why we can add staff and purchase supplies." "The title 1 grant," explains Miss Hallohran, who designs the budgets for Mrs. Glasser, "is sponsored by the State Department of Education and funded by the federal government."

following is a breakdown of the Title 1 budget for equipment and supplies.

**EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES**  
School Library - \$1 1,367  
Audio-Visual - \$4,901  
Other Teachers - \$8,498  
Supplies-Equip. - \$17,642

**STAFF PATTERN**  
1 - Psychologist  
1 - Educational Supervisors  
2 - Teachers  
40 - Assistant Teachers

Some of the equipment which has been directly purchased from the Title 1 budget is: Library supplies, audio-visual equipment which includes a closed circuit unit in the intensive therapy complex, speech equipment.

Noted in each classroom except the shops, music room and library was a color television set which Mrs. Glasser states was donated from private sources.

Miss Hallohran cites as an example to demonstrate the high cost of good equipment, the Edison Responsive Learning System (ERE Room) in operation since 1967, which has an annual maintenance cost of \$6,600, "if it wasn't for the Federal grant we could not meet this cost." This is a remedial reading machine. Children are assigned to use it on teacher recommendation. Willowbrook has three. They service 24 children.

*Page 2 of 2 pages*