

Church units pledge aid to Willowbrook

ALBANY (AP) — Protestant, Catholic and Jewish groups have agreed to try to ease conditions at Willowbrook State School on Staten Island and other New York State mental hygiene facilities through volunteer efforts, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller announced yesterday.

The governor issued a statement reporting that a meeting of members of his staff and leaders of the three faiths produced an agreement by the religious organizations to do the following:

- Attempt to establish day care facilities at churches and synagogues for mentally handicapped children.
- Help recruit families willing to board such children.
- Try to promote "greater parental involvement in the care and treatment of patients."

Seek to make churches and synagogues more receptive to establishing programs for the handicapped, such as Sunday school classes.

- Initiate a vigorous new effort to promote still more volunteer work at the institutions."

"It is through offers of assistance such as this that we

will improve conditions at state institutions," Rockefeller said.

Cuts in state mental hygiene funds have produced severe overcrowding and understaffing at several institutions caring for the mentally handicapped or retarded.

Willowbrook, in particular, has been subject to publicity by the news media. Considerable public outcry followed reports of untended children

living in filthy conditions.