

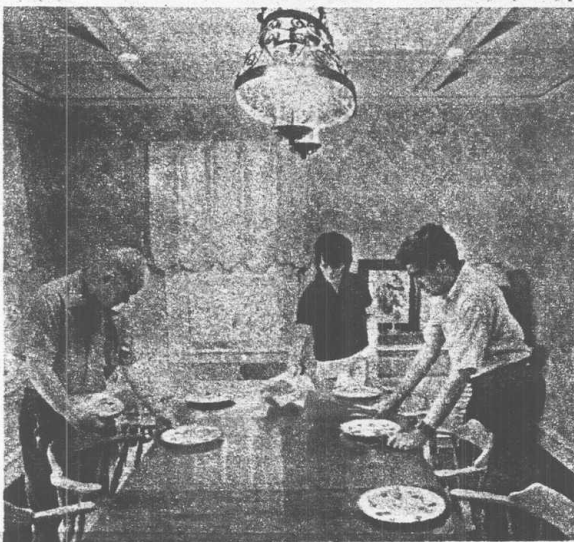
If, instead, a hostel were available, the transition from family living to group living would be immeasurably easier."

The value of the hostel concept for many retardates seems to have been conclusively proven by those which already exist. Dr. Grunberg sees the hostel as "one of the modalities of a whole spectrum of services and facilities required to meet the different needs of a very heterogeneous group of people."

Joseph Harris of the N.Y. City Association for the Help of Retarded Children is considerably more enthusiastic. "They (the hostels) are continued on page 44



Alfred O'Malley earns ego-boosting salary operating die cutter at sheltered workshop in Freeport. More retarded could work if their abilities were more widely recognized.



Eddie Balck (l.) and Robert Breger set table with Mrs. Christine Daniels, house mother in Hempstead hostel.

the greatest thing that ever happened," he insists. "At Fineson House, we are servicing primarily a higher-functioning population. But it doesn't mean that all hostels would have to be like this. With different staffing, more recreational and habilitative programming within the hostel, a more structured environment, the hostel could be the solution for the lower functioning, too."

Hostels could greatly relieve overcrowding, but they will never entirely replace institutions. At least 1.5% (90,000 people) of the nation's total retarded population are so profoundly handicapped that they will always require round-the-clock nursing and custodial care.

"Many of the multiply handicapped children who present severe problems of physical care cannot remain in the community for long," says psychologist Harriet Blodgett in her highly readable guide for parents, "Mentally Retarded Children" (165 pages, University of Minnesota Press, \$5.95). "The community as we now know it, cannot adequately serve those most severely retarded, those at truly subtrainable levels, beyond the age of reliable diagnosis.

"This would usually mean institutional placement by age 5 or 6. The community cannot realistically serve some retardates whose presence in the family imposes on normal family members unbearable burdens. People have different breaking points."

In Dr. Grunberg's words, the "last great mistake" in planning for New York's retarded was the Suffolk State School in Melville, L.I., which opened in 1965. Originally, Suffolk State was supposed to house 2,800 retardates; it now has 1,800. Four new institutions are in the process of opening in New York, the largest of these being the Kings County State School in Brooklyn, which will have 750 residents. Officials of the Association for the Help of Retarded Children are unanimous in denouncing Kings County as still another mistake. They contend that smaller institutions with a maximum of 200 to 300 residents would be less dehumanizing.

For parents struggling with the burden of keeping even a trainable or educable retardate at home, the hope of eventual placement in a hostel is balanced against the dread of possible institutionalization. The lack of sufficient private residential facilities and the fees (up to \$8,000 annually) for most of those that do exist put these out of reach for many families.

"We have accepted the fact that we probably won't outlive our children," says Mrs. Mary Cover. "We're all hoping that we'll last long enough to see the advent of more of these hostels. When you realize that there aren't enough as yet and when you see those exposes on Willowbrook, the future seems terribly frightening.

"For some families, I suppose there will be no way out except an institution. But dear God, not a Willowbrook for my son." □