

She'll leave Willowbrook... for a new home and family

Haja Lopez is still living at the Willowbrook State School the place she has had to call home since her birth six years ago. In a "few weeks," however, that situation should change. Willowbrook school has received 40 calls from families willing to take Haya into their homes.

From these 40 preliminary calls, the school has 15 applications from families who wish to adopt Haya, and other spina bifida children. These children need a home in order to receive special care in the Haverstraw (N.Y.) Clinic.

These families are now being screened and interviewed, by community services teams.

Karen Meyerson, Haja's social worker, feels that "if these children don't get adopted now, they will spend the rest of their lives in an institution." She notes that as the children get older, it gets progressively harder to place them with a willing family.

"So far the homes that have been screened have been beautiful, with nice atmospheres . . . nice families." Interested families have been taking Haja and the other children home for a day on the weekends.

If the family then still considers adoption it can take the child home for an entire weekend, and then for two weekends before a final decision is made.

In most cases the woman of the household comes to the Willowbrook School to have a talk with the social workers. Then the youngsters come out to meet the parent.

All inquiries about Haja and the other children can be made with Miss Meyerson at Willowbrook State School.