

lies, some into foster families and some may even live in their own apartments.

"Three of our recent residents hold full-time, \$7,000-a-year jobs at Greenpoint Hospital," said Rasleek Kaamil, the center's director, "and two of them married each other and live on their own now."

The halfway houses proposed by the various State Department of Mental Hygiene developmental centers in the city will be much smaller than the Williamsburg group home, however. Most will be designed for between eight and 12 residents.

And although a number of halfway houses, some of them called "hostels," are being run by private voluntary groups such as Catholic Charities, the Association for the Help of Retarded Children, Contemporary Guidance and the Guild for Exceptional Children, the state has yet to get one operational.

Overwhelming Support

Proper facilities are hard to find, and the government red tape involved in purchasing and renovating homes is complex. But a major obstacle has been community reaction. Brooklyn Developmental Services, that borough's branch of the State Department of Mental Hygiene, recently purchased a house at 217 Clinton Ave. to use as a halfway house.

The Pratt Area Community Council voted to approve the project but the local planning board voiced disapproval.

On Staten Island, the Willowbrook Developmental Center went ahead and purchased a large frame home on Tysen St. to use as a halfway house — but Mrs. Holzka and many of her neighbors are trying to block the proposal's implementation.

In the Bronx, the local developmental services unit operates programs for retarded people, but as yet has no community residences although they are in planning stages, officials said.

Yet in Manhattan, two very different communities showed overwhelming support for the Manhattan Developmental Center's two most recent proposals for group homes.

One is for a residence for 140 people at 54 Haven Ave. in the Washington Heights-Inwood section. The proposal provides for plenty of community involvement with the retarded neighbors, such as shared use of the home's swimming pool and theater, joint recreational outings and the retarded citizen's participation in church, social and civic affairs whenever possible.

The other proposal was for a halfway house, in a brownstone at 141 W. Fourth St. in Greenwich Village, not far from Washington Square Park. Community Planning Board 2 in the Village voted unanimously to welcome the home into its neighborhood.

"Some people didn't want 'them' in the area," recalled Patricia Bertrand, chief of community services for Manhattan Developmental Center. "But since we already had a large facility at 75 Morton St., many Villagers had gotten to know our retarded residents because they go to workshops, schools, parks, churches and synagogues in the area. So they didn't have many of the fears and misconceptions that others might have."

Staten Island has not had the same beneficial association with institutions for the retarded.

It was the scandals at Willowbrook that helped spur the movement to decentralize and bring retarded citizens back out into their communities. This led to the establishment of Developmental centers in each of the five boroughs.

"How can we expect the state to manage these halfway houses all over the Island if they can't even manage their affairs efficiently in one place?" asked Mrs. Holzka. She stressed that her neighbors are concerned about a "saturation of this part of the Island with facilities for special-need, high-risk people" and their fear that the retarded might some day be replaced by other "wards" of the State Department of Mental Hygiene — the mentally ill, addicts and alcoholics.

At Robidoux, chief of community services at Willowbrook, said that a recent program of teaching



Instructor Charity Carney teaches resident a marketable skill—use of the sewing machine.