

How Carol Burnett reduced odors at Willowbrook Developmental Center

by Anthony Fontaino

Willowbrook Developmental Center, Staten Island, N. Y., wasn't always as cozy a place to visit or to work at as it now is. As late as 1966—prior to the use of a leading germicidal detergent and an extensive and continuing training program for all housekeeping employees—things weren't so pleasant. Many of our severely retarded patients are incontinent, and odors were prevalent everywhere. Not only were they noticeable within our buildings, but they could frequently be detected emanating from the buildings as one walked about the grounds. For our employees, to return home from each day's work by bus (even after showering and changing clothes) was an unpleasant experience. This experience was not only unpleasant for other riders on the bus due to odors that had permeated the newly changed clothing while it was stored in employee lockers during the day, but it was also unpleasant for our employees due to the offensive reactions of many of the other riders, caused by the objectionable odor inadvertently brought aboard by our personnel.

What was most frustrating to our cleaning personnel at that time was the fact that they were making a conscientious effort to keep our buildings clean; yet this severe odor problem remained. It seemed to them to be an impossible

