

# Proud of Residential Center for Retardates

By MARY ENGELS

Sixteen months ago, the Nina Eaton Residential Center for mental retardates opened in South Beach with great expectations. According to the center's director, Fred Stein, and some members of his staff last week, "the center is more than fulfilling its goal."

In his office, Stein explained, "It began as an experiment to show we could take a small group, 49 of the worst cases at Willowbrook, severely and profoundly retarded residents, from ages 18 and up, and be able to give them full rehabilitative services in a residential background as opposed to being institutionalized."

### Proud of Results

"Our ultimate goal has been to allow each individual to work towards his or her fullest potential and we have striven to give each the most normal environment possible."

The proof is in the results to which Stein and his staff proudly point. Stein said, "The number of ambulatory residents was zero back in June 75. Today

13 of our residents are ambulatory. None was toilet trained then. Today 27 are. Those in a self-feeding program were also zero in 1975 but today seven can feed themselves."

"Most important," added the director, "is that three of our residents have gone to live elsewhere in the borough of their origin because they successfully, to the best of their ability, can care for themselves."

The center, which is run under the auspices of the United Cerebral Palsy of New York State, Inc., is located in Building D on the grounds of the South Beach Psychiatric Center.

### Forde's Idea

Floria Antell, director of institutional community services for UCP, said that it was while working at Willowbrook four years ago in a small program similar to the one now at Eaton that the idea for the residential center was conceived by the then acting Willowbrook director, James Forde.

"He approached us with the idea and fortunately we were able to get the space at South Beach through his help and the N.Y. State Department of Mental Hygiene," Miss Antell said.

Rooms for the residents are colorful

and homelike and are in a two-story building.

"It certainly beats the dorm living they had at Willowbrook," said Miss Antell.

How the residents react to their environment has also apparently changed their outlook on life for the better, according to the staff.

"Some of the residents use to recoil when you came near them at Willowbrook. Here they appreciate what everyone is doing to help them and the good old tender loving care certainly makes a difference in their attitudes," one staff member said.

Stein praised the staff members who he said, have given more than their own working time to help out.

"One of our therapy aides recently bought a television set as a Christmas present for the two residents she works with," he said.

### Good Grooming

Another therapy aide, Carmen Scifo, recently suggested a proposal for good grooming under the activities of daily living program, that was not accepted but apparently seemed to be working out beautifully.

We watched as three residents were



Barbara Grant (standing, left) works with center residents.