

Community status essentially means that Rich is allowed to come and go on the Willowbrook campus and into the community as he pleases. The policy came under severe attack two years ago when a resident wandered out of an unlocked building and eventually froze to death on the Willowbrook grounds, which include 40 buildings and 380 acres.

Mrs. Ryan defended the use of community status privileges for Rich, saying that he has the "intellectual ability" to function in the community. "All I can tell you is that he has a history of assaultive behavior but not outside the Willowbrook campus," she said.

She said that isolating Rich was no solution to his problems and that "given his functional status...he is quite capable" of living in the community.

Mrs. Ryan said two attempts had been made to place Rich into a community facility, but failed because Rich had a "low outburst level." She described weekend visits he made to the homes of volunteers as "sometimes good, sometimes bad."

Mrs. Ryan pointed out that partial reason for Rich's community status was the Willowbrook Consent Decree, the document signed in 1975 by state officials, which mandates that Willowbrook residents be given "the least restrictive" living arrangement possible. There have been arguments for the past three years — in and out of court — about the definition of "least restrictive."

Mrs. Ryan and other Willowbrook sources said that Rich needed psychiatric services that were not available at Willowbrook. Mrs. Ryan said the state was "attempting to develop psychiatric

resources."

In January 1976 the Willowbrook Review Panel, in a formal recommendation made in federal court, told Willowbrook officials to develop "a plan for providing consultation by qualified psychiatrists...for emotionally disturbed" residents.

A spokesman for the Review Panel said yesterday that at a meeting last week the state said it had not obtained such services because qualified, interested doctors did not want to work at Willowbrook.

Mrs. Ryan, acting director for Dr. Levester Cannon who is on vacation, said that Rich had worked for a "short period" in Willowbrook's housekeeping department but did not keep the job because "he was not able to cope with his expectations."

Despite the Willowbrook Decree, which says that each of Willowbrook's 2,500 residents must have six hours of daily therapeutic programming, Rich was not in any program. Mrs. Ryan said "he did not want to go."

One high-ranking Willowbrook official said Rich was "inappropriately placed" at Willowbrook and needed psychiatric treatment that developmental centers do not offer. The official said that state psychiatric centers will not treat retarded persons from state developmental centers.

State officials arranged yesterday for a Legal Aid Society attorney, Michael Brennan, to represent Rich.