



Amelia Bovenizer, right, works with Robert Guerrero while Robert's teacher, Linda Cutler, looks on. Mrs. Bovenizer is part of a federally funded foster grandparent program which began at the Willowbrook Developmental Center this week.

S.I. Advance Photo by Frank J. Johns

Volunteer program working, but...

14 'grandparents' assisting at center

Willowbrook Developmental Center's foster grandparent program got off the ground for real this week and all has gone well for the new program. The only problem is that all is just not enough to meet the needs of Willowbrook's residents.

Officials at the center report that after a March 23 article in the Advance, 14 senior citizen volunteers signed up for the program which offers about \$32 weekly to low-income persons for four hours of work.

The training phase of the program

began April 1 and the volunteers started actually working and spending time with retarded Willowbrook residents Monday. "It's been just beautiful to watch," Linda Carelli, Willowbrook's director of consumer and citizen affairs, says.

Ms. Carelli says the program needs a total of 80 volunteers, however.

The program has a twofold purpose, Ms. Carelli says— to provide part-time volunteer, income-producing work for older persons and to provide supportive, person-to-person services for retarded children many of whom have not spent time with older persons.

The federal government has put \$135,000 into the program at Willowbrook where 2,500 retarded persons live. Nationwide there are 100 similar foster

grandparent programs and 13,934 foster grandparents.

Anyone interested in joining should contact Robert Slawinski, director of volunteer services at Willowbrook between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.