

Retarded deserve community concern

I read with sadness the story of the meeting regarding a facility for the retarded in Dongan Hills. I used to teach young severely retarded adolescents at a small school on Staten Island. These children had lived most of their lives at Willowbrook. There were many days, I would become very frustrated and angry that these children had to go back to Willowbrook where virtually they would vegetate on the wards.

Many of these children would have benefitted greatly to small home-like setting where they could learn basic life survival skills and perhaps contribute somewhat to the community.

I can understand the concern of the homeowners of the community who are opposed to such a facility. I used to reside in Dongan Hills. However, I cannot condone or accept attitudes, dating back 30, 40 even 50 years, that condemn the retarded. Retarded people are people and should be treated as such. They are not inferior as people because God created them just as He created the rest of us.

Those people in Dongan Hills are lucky their children were born normal and healthy.

It is a really sad thing to see young children condemned to a life of institutionalization simply because they were born retarded. Institutions are not the answer.

**LYNDA COSTAGLIOLA,
New Brighton**