



Marie Decker, left, who has been a foster grandparent since the program began last year, helps a resident work on a peg board.

S.I. Advance Photo by Robert Parsons

"I don't think I want to be involved in politics anymore," he adds.

Foster program

In March of last year, the Staten Island Developmental Center, then known as Willowbrook, announced the beginning of a foster grandparent program which offered persons over 60 years old the opportunity to make some money and also spend time with a retarded person who never had a grandparent.

The federal government appropriated \$135,000 for the new venture and Willowbrook sought 80 older persons for the program. Robert Slawinski, coordinator of volunteer services at the center, says today that the program has worked well and has had as many as 31 persons working with residents.

There are 26 foster grandparents right now — 10 of whom have been in the program since its inception. Slawinski says the center is still actively looking for more foster grandparents and he urges interested persons to call to learn if they are eligible. The volunteer office is open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.