

Foster parents sought for retarded, handicapped

The Officer of Special Services for Children has launched a drive to recruit more foster parents on Staten Island to take care of retarded and handicapped children.

According to John Robinson, the office's placement supervisor, there is a shortage of foster parents in the borough for these kinds of special children. "It's not hard to find homes for normal children," he explained yesterday. "But it's a different story in the case of the handicapped and the retarded."

Children who are not placed, he said, end up staying in the Staten Island Developmental Center and other large institutions.

Robinson said the foster care program is open to both single and married adults of "good character" and with

steady incomes. Welfare clients are also eligible. He urged interested persons to contact the office located at 2 Lafayette St. in Manhattan, by calling 433-2560.

To qualify for the program, Robinson said, applicants must attend a series of group-discussion sessions in the Manhattan office and allow social workers to visit their homes.

The board rates paid to the foster parents are \$160 a month for children up to 5 years old, \$180 for the 6 to 11 age group, and \$200 for youths over 12 years old. The parents also get clothing allowances for the children and special fees of up to \$135 a month for the "time and effort" of caring for handicapped and retarded youths, Robinson said.

In addition, the office covers all the medical expenses of the foster children.

Robinson emphasized, however, that the fees are not regarded as compensation to the foster parents. "They are just for maintenance," he explained. "The compensation has to come in the form of the intangible benefits of caring for the retarded and handicapped."

Connelly blasts Krupsak's attack on DMH shift

Assemblywoman Elizabeth Connelly said today that comments by Lt. Gov. Mary Anne Krupsak about the reorganization of the state Mental Hygiene Department were "irresponsible" and "ridiculous."

During a press conference in the State Office Building, Mrs. Connelly, chairman of the Assembly Mental Health Committee, responded to Miss Krupsak's criticism of the "chaos" in the department, which appeared in Manhattan newspapers.

Assemblyman Alan Hevesi of Queens, chairman of the Assembly Health Committee, also responded to Miss Krupsak's charges.

"She's never been there to give us any concerns that she's had" during the reorganization, Mrs. Connelly said. "And to come out with the broad statements that she has is ridiculous."

The Assemblywoman characterized Miss Krupsak's statements as politically motivated, but said it was "irresponsible to climb on the backs of the mentally retarded for political motivations. I hate, in that particular area, for people to try to grab headlines."

In her defense of the state's reorganization of the department, Mrs. Connelly cited its long history and its virtual shelving by former Gov. Rockefeller. She added that it was Gov. Carey who finally took steps to see that a plan was accomplished.

"All advocates and opponents had ample opportunity to come to us and at no time, as far as I was concerned, did she ever contact my committee or me and say she had problems.

"I've always welcomed other women and have looked to her for guidance, but I've never gotten answers to my telephone calls."