

Howe, director of the Staten Island Developmental Center, explained the difference between the mentally retarded and the mentally ill.

Mental retardation takes place in people under 18 years old and cannot be cured. The retarded, Miss Howe said, usually have a mentality that would be comparable to an 8-year-old child.

Mental illness, on the other hand, can occur at any age and can be treated. Miss Howe stressed that the retarded should not be confused with the mentally ill.

Sonia Braniff, board chairman of the Staten Island Regional Retardation and Disabilities Council, a group assisting the center in setting up group homes, said advisory groups that include neighborhood residents would be set up to help monitor the performance of each group home.

Mrs. Braniff reported offices will be set up to oversee the operation of group homes in each of the Island's three community boards.

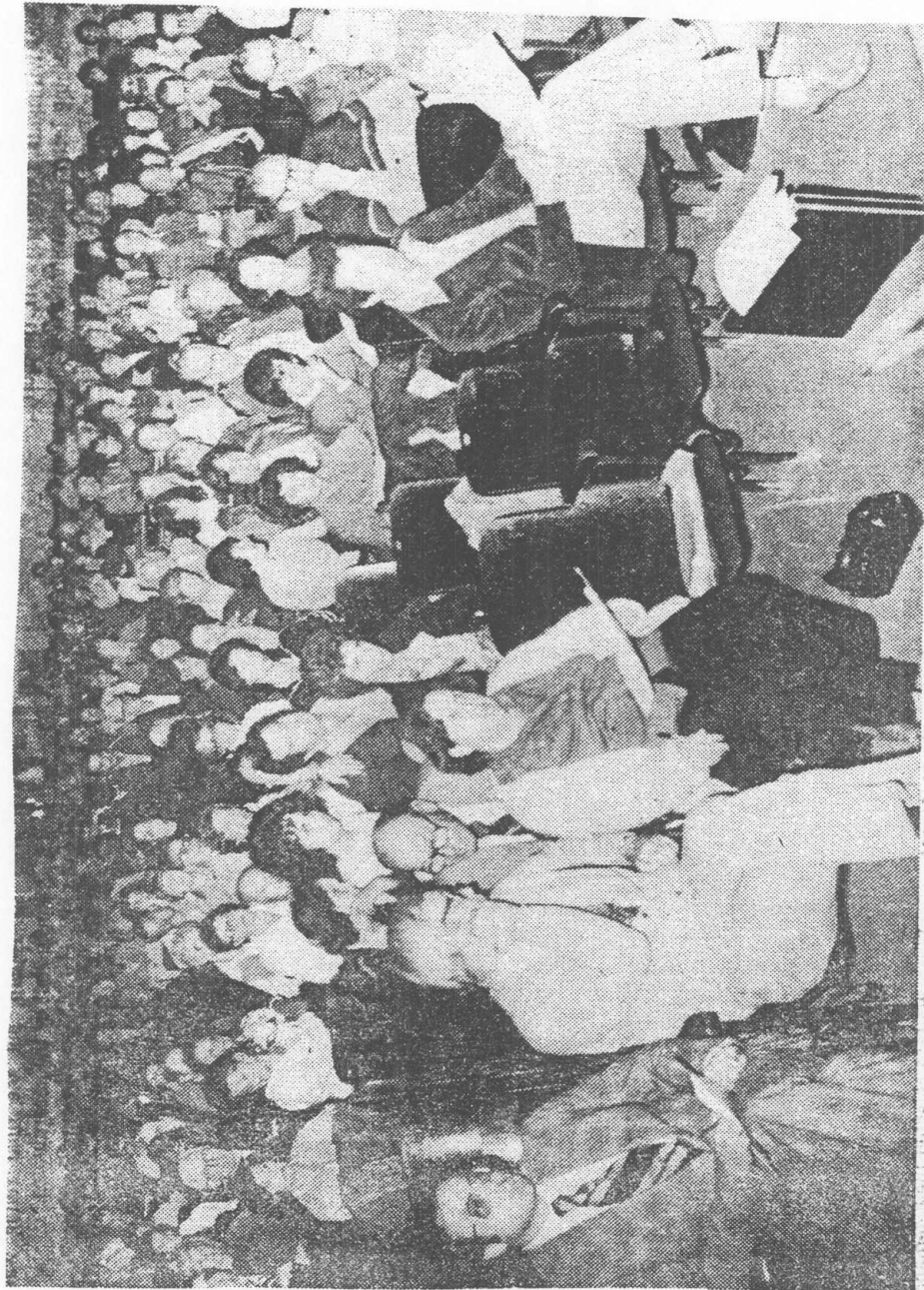
One resident who came out strongly in favor of group homes was Paul Merrill, president of Concerned Parents of Retarded Children, who said the retarded have a right to get out of constricting institutions and into good homes.

"We do not want our kids in institutions anymore; we want them in a decent home," he said. "All we want is your support in saying that we can stay in the community."

Six sites are being considered in Annandale; five each in Great Kills, Tottenville and Oakwood, and two each in Eltingville, Princes Bay and Huguenot.

Single sites are being considered in New Dorp, Richmond, Arden Heights, Charleston, Richmond Valley and Pleasant Plains.

The board will announce its site selections at its next regular meeting Nov.



About 300 persons fill the auditorium in Totten Intermediate School for a hearing on the selection of eight sites for group homes on the South Shore.

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