

## Care of retarded is well-monitored

Your editorial, "A new New York disgrace," is one with which this writer must take exception. The facts as mentioned suggested clients from the mental health sector and therefore should not have been identified as mentally retarded people.

As a private, not-for-profit agency specializing in comprehensive care for the retarded it has been our experience that the development and operation of a group home is one of the most demanding programs maintained by the agency. While our own standard of quality aims for excellence, other monitoring agents ensure this as fact. Accountability for all programmatic and fiscal components must be made in compliance with the Willowbrook Consent Decree, to the borough Developmental Services Office, the regional office of the Office of Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities and the Staten Island Regional Retardation and Disabilities Council. Rest assured that neglect of the client as noted in your editorial cannot possibly occur.

From the point of screening for admission, to the placement of a client, there are extensive multi-discipline conferences supporting suitability of client incorporation in a group home setting. An appropriate day program must be an accompanying factor prior to placement. Specific developmental plans are designed for each client, ensuring continued growth as part of the "in house" program. Those implemented plans are reviewed and updated quarterly.

In short, we are committed to providing an opportunity whereby the mentally retarded individual may live, not simply exist, in a supportive, happy, enriched environment.

I regret that your editorial may have further confused the community as to what to expect from "group homes for the retarded," thereby offering another layer of problems for advocates of the retarded to overcome.

An open invitation is extended to your staff to visit our facilities. We hope you will accept as we would welcome the opportunity to illustrate the points mentioned above.

JOAN HODUM,  
Executive director,  
Staten Island Aid  
for Retarded Children,

West Brighton

## Theater tried to ban handicapped students

We are teachers at Staten Island Developmental Center. Recently, we brought a group of your physically handicapped, wheelchair-bound students to the Island Theater to attend a showing of "Superman." When we arrived, we were met by the theater manager who informed us that we were not welcome because our presence would be offensive to the other patrons in the crowded theater. After a brief argument, we were admitted to the adjoining feature.

This was a great disappointment to our students, who represent some of the higher functioning residents of the center. They had been looking forward to seeing "Superman" for several days.

In essence, we feel that the manager was discriminating against our students by even suggesting that their handicap would offend other people. He made these remarks in front of them as if they could not understand and had no feelings. We also feel that he was doing the people of Staten Island a disservice by implying that they were not compassionate enough to deal with handicapped people.

If retarded people are to be able to function in the community, attitudes such as this cannot be tolerated. We do not care to patronize the Island Theater either socially or professionally any longer. We will also recommend this course of action to our friends, families and colleagues.

GERRI POWDER,  
PATRICIA RUMOLO,  
Willowbrook