

Staten Island

Daily News, Sunday, August 26, 1979

Jogging trails for the handicapped

By MARY ENGELS

THE GROUNDS of the Staten Island Developmental Center at Willowbrook have two new trails designed to increase the fitness of the patients there — one a mile-and-a-half jogging course with 20 exercise stations and the other a smaller, nine-station course for the wheelchair-confined.

Funds for the trails were provided by the Benevolent Society for Retarded Children. Ellen Forman, the coordinator, said the project was designed by the Federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation and the President's Council on Physical Fitness.

"To our knowledge, it is the first of its

kind to be used at a center such as ours for the mentally retarded," Forman said.

"It is for use not only for those at the center but in the community as well. We feel the more the community does participate, the less fear they will have of the place and its residents. So, in that respect, we feel it will be educational as well as recreational."

Easily accessible

Located behind Buildings 60 and 61, the trail is intended to provide an enjoyable, inexpensive, and easily accessible facility and program for attaining and maintaining physical fitness. When completed in sequence, the trail is set up to provide a warm-up, a good workout, and a cooling-off period.

Patterned after the Vita course of physical fitness, the exercises outlined at each station were selected to build stamina, flexibility, and cardio-vascular strength. The signs at each station advise how many times each exercise should be done before proceeding to the next station.

Training for Olympics

One station will have overhead parallel bars for hand-walking; another has pairs of rings suspended from chains for swinging the body in circular motions; and another has a set of log obstacles that must be jumped over. There are also horizontal bars, chinning bars, balance beams, and a maze.

One of the most important signs is at the starting point: It warns the walker to consult with a doctor if there is any question about ability to participate.

The wheelchair course, which is located near Building 1, has been designed to proportion upper body exercises and the maneuvering of the chairs. The center intends to use the trails for training patients who will enter the Special Olympics.

The course will be open seven days a week. The hours will be indicated on a sign at the main gate on Victory Blvd.

"It certainly breaks up the boredom of just jogging," Forman said. "Besides, it's nicer to run on grass than on the street."