

## Lifestyle

# Foster grandparents at upstate session

The citywide transit strike and a wet, gloomy day failed to slow down plans of 30 foster grandparents who left from the Staten Island Developmental Center by Domenico Bus yesterday to attend a three-day training session and recognition banquet in Grossinger's Hotel in the Catskills.

They're joining more than 1,500 volunteers in the Foster Grandparent Program (FGP) and staff from throughout the state.

Participating in the powwow is Nettie Evans, coordinator of the FGP program on Staten Island, which is sponsored by the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

According to Alfred G. (Ted) Tottey Jr., president of the National (and New York State) Association of Foster Grandparents Program Directors, 1,800 FGP volunteers serve more than 3,000 children in over 70 schools and institutions throughout the state.

The volunteers range in age from 60 to 90 and "do an outstanding job through the year," he said.

On Staten Island, volunteers serve in the Staten Island Developmental Center in Willowbrook.

FGP is a volunteer program of ACTION, the federal government's agency for volunteer service, in which Americans, 60 years or over, spend four hours a day, five days a week, bringing love, care and companionship to emotionally, physically and mentally handicapped children.

Staten Island Developmental Center recently received a federal grant to sponsor a foster grandparent program, according to Ms. Evans. The purpose of FGP is to provide meaningful part-time volunteer opportunities for low-income older persons, no longer in the regular work force, who can give supportive, person-to-person services to children with special or exceptional needs.

The foster grandparents provide children under the age of 21 with individual attention, companionship and physical and emotional support and encouragement, Monday through Friday, for a total of four hours a day (two hours per



Foster grandparents set to leave Island for upstate training seminar.

child), in the Developmental Center.

In addition to providing an opportunity for all Americans to serve their community through volunteer work, the program benefits foster grandparents with a stipend of \$2 an hour; a comprehensive annual medical examination; transportation to and from the Developmental Center; a paid vacation, sick time; personal leave time; workmen's compensation; a nutritious meal each day; social service assistance and recognition events and activities.

Currently, the Islanders program has openings for 10 additional foster grandparents. Interested seniors may contact Ms. Evans at the Developmental Center, 2760 Victory Blvd., Willowbrook, Monday to Friday, or by phone at 698-1440, extension 8832, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.