

2 Island organizations get \$\$ in state budget

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ALBANY — Closing the financial books for the 1980-81 fiscal year, the Senate and Assembly yesterday approved a \$165.8 million deficiency budget that includes \$125,000 for two Staten Island organizations.

The spending authorization includes \$51 million for state employee salaries, thereby ensuring that the state will meet remaining payrolls for the 1980-81 fiscal year ending March 31. State officials had warned that without passage of a deficiency budget, payrolls this week at state institutions, including the South Beach Psychiatric Center, Staten Island Developmental Center and Arthur Kill Correctional Facility, could not be met.

Included in the deficiency budget, are \$70,000 for the Staten Island Children's Museum in Stapleton and \$55,000 for the Jewish Community Center's Learning Institute, Tompkinsville.

Both programs were funded in 1979-80 fiscal year's supplemental budget, but were left out of this year's budget appropriations.

The inclusion of the Island funds along with more than \$500,000 for Nassau County projects raised eyebrows during debate on the budget yesterday.

It is not just a coincidence that Sen. John J. Marchi of Ward Hill and Assemblyman Arthur J. Kremer of Nassau County chair the legislative committees that control appropriations.

Asked why Nassau and Staten Island programs got the bulk of local appropriations, Kramer, a Democrat who chairs the Assembly Ways and Means Committee, said the agencies just happened to provide "valuable" services.

They somehow "fell between the cracks" when lawmakers approved a supplemental budget last November, he said.

Marchi, a Republican who chairs the Senate Finance Committee, said the Island programs were both worthy and had already budgeted for state assistance.

Regardless of how the funds were secured, the director of the Staten Island Children's Museum, Mindy Duitz, said she was delighted. The funds, she said, will enable the museum to mount a new exhibit, pay off some loans and provide a buffer against threatened cuts in federal aid.

"It is also wonderful to see that the state feels we are a worthwhile project," Ms. Duitz said. "It helps our credibility."

The appropriation to the museum marks a \$20,000 increase over last year's allocation. The Learning Institute, which provides remedial education assistance to students on an after school basis, is receiving a \$15,000 increase over last year's appropriation in the deficiency budget.

Marchi, however, was not able to provide funding for everything on his list. The Eden II Institute in Dongan Hills, which received

\$15,000 in state funds last year for its autistic education programs, was left out of both the supplemental and deficiency budget.

"It shows that even John Marchi can't get funding for everything," a Marchi spokesman said.

Diane Petersen, associate director of Eden II, said the institute has been forced to "cut corners" to make up for the loss of the \$15,000.

The deficiency budget also included \$7.6 million for increased operating expenses at state psychiatric centers, and developmental centers — mostly related to larger patient loads than projected at the start of the fiscal year. It also includes \$5.7 million for group homes and day

treatment facilities for the retarded.

In addition, \$13.1 million is appropriated to meet a collective bargaining agreement with employees at the City University of New York.

The budget also includes appropriations of \$165 million and \$265 million respectively to New York City, reflecting higher than budgeted amounts generated from the Stock Transfer Taxes and Sales Tax.

But Margaret Weiss, the city's legislative lobbyist, said the money had already been counted on by city budget officials and does not represent a windfall.

"I wish it were new money," she said, "but it isn't."