

Union president to fight to keep center open

The president of the Public Employees Federation, which represents professional workers at the Staten Island Developmental Center, vowed yesterday to fight plans to virtually close the institution.

John Kramer, president of the union, told center workers that the state is violating a consent decree by transferring residents, not to small group homes as required, but other developmental centers.

He also complained that teachers at the Island center are being transferred to other state facilities "without any consultation with the union."

The Willowbrook center, which currently houses about 1,000 retarded residents, is slated to lose all but 250 of them under the terms of a consent decree signed by Gov. Carey in 1975. In the next state fiscal year, beginning April 1, the center is slated to lose one-third of its 3,000 employees.

"The Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities must not be allowed to close this facility by skirting the decree and justifying their actions in order to save "tax dollars," Kramer said.

PEF represents about 600 center employees. The remaining 2,400 workers are represented by the Civil Service Employees Association.

The meeting, held at the Island center, was called after some employees accused PEF of not doing enough to protect their jobs.