

## **Group home residents deserve our concern**

To comment on "Group homes causing neighbors problems" in the Advance April 2:

As for group homes being placed on Staten Island I would like it to be known that:

1. They are not only placed in communities of Staten Island, they are placed in communities of all boroughs.
2. These people in group homes are non-violent, capable of working (and they do work), able to take care of all their physical needs, able to hold an intelligent conversation with you, for they are not severely retarded.
3. As for your concern for the individual taken out of the house in a straight jacket, didn't you ever see an ambulance, a police car and a person in a stretcher? That person was having an epileptic fit and was placed in a straitjacket so she would not hurt herself. Perhaps we should educate and get involved rather than ridicule and be negative.
4. Concerning the person who did not wish to enter the automobile, haven't you ever fought with your child who did not want to do what you wanted him or her to do? Have

you never forced your child in a car, a room, your house?

Perhaps you don't realize it but these people pay taxes too. They deserve to be a part of the community when they are too advanced for institutional living.

You claim you did not know that the state was taking over 490 Buel Ave. That's funny. People hired a community lawyer and went around petitioning.

Retardation can strike anyone, even in your own family. I believe we should reach out and touch those less fortunate than us. Perhaps we should not take such a negative approach on a group home but get involved to know the people who live in them. They are not on the institutionalized level, they are good, loving and intelligent.

Open your hearts, be understanding, God is very rewarding. Don't let fear take over your lives. Don't turn your backs on them, reach out, for they are searching citizens. Searching for love and understanding.

**LINDA FENNER,**

**Eltingville**