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Metro

Staten Island

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Big turnout for dedication at developmental center

By MARY ENGELS

More than 200 people turned out to honor Assemblywoman Elizabeth Connelly during ceremonies at the Staten Island Developmental Center when a renovated building there was named after her.

Officials of the State Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, the staff and faculty of Staten Island Developmental Center and many others were on hand to praise the woman who has worked hard for many years to see that the developmentally disabled were receiving all the benefits and privileges they were entitled to.

Dr. Ella Curry, director of the center, said she was particularly pleased to note the dual significance of the celebration.

"IN ADDITION TO NAMING it after a person who has been in the vanguard of the committed individuals, the building itself will house the first specially designed program area instituted at our center.

"For the first time our staff will be afforded an ideal physical plant to effect their professional objectives, utilizing a unique multi-sensory program approach."

"More than one-fourth of the clients who current-

ly reside at the center will now be given the maximum chance to develop their basic living skills. Such programing improvement will facilitate their anticipated placement, into the least restrictive environment at the earliest opportunity. Our potential for progress in this area is now tremendously improved."

The new building was dedicated Friday as the Elizabeth A. Connelly Program Center and will be used to teach basic living skills to 130 of the Staten Island Developmental Center's most severely disabled clients. Programing is scheduled to begin today.

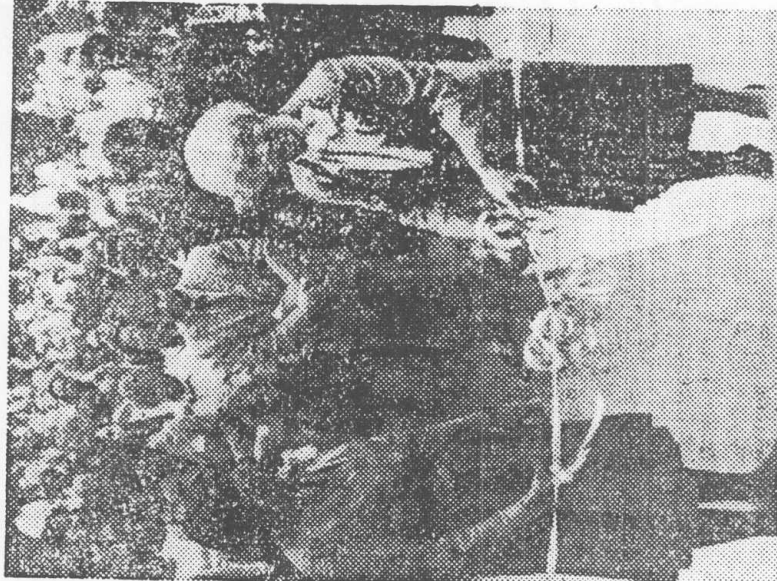
Connelly said she was "overwhelmed at the honor. I see the program center as simply another step in the necessary fight to bring dignity to the lives of the disabled."

SHE THANKED THE STAFF and workers who were instrumental in rehabilitating the facility.

After the dedication ceremonies, everyone was given a tour of the building which turned out to be visually appealing with its bright decorative colors scattered throughout the two floors.

Curry noted that another building on the grounds would be renovated in similar fashion for the same program.

The cost of renovating the new Connelly Center was approximately \$90,000.



JIM ROMANO DAILY NEWS

Assemblywoman Elizabeth Connelly (r.) and Dr. Ella Curry, director of the Staten Island Developmental Center, cut ribbon during ceremonies Friday in which a renovated building at the center was named after Connelly.