

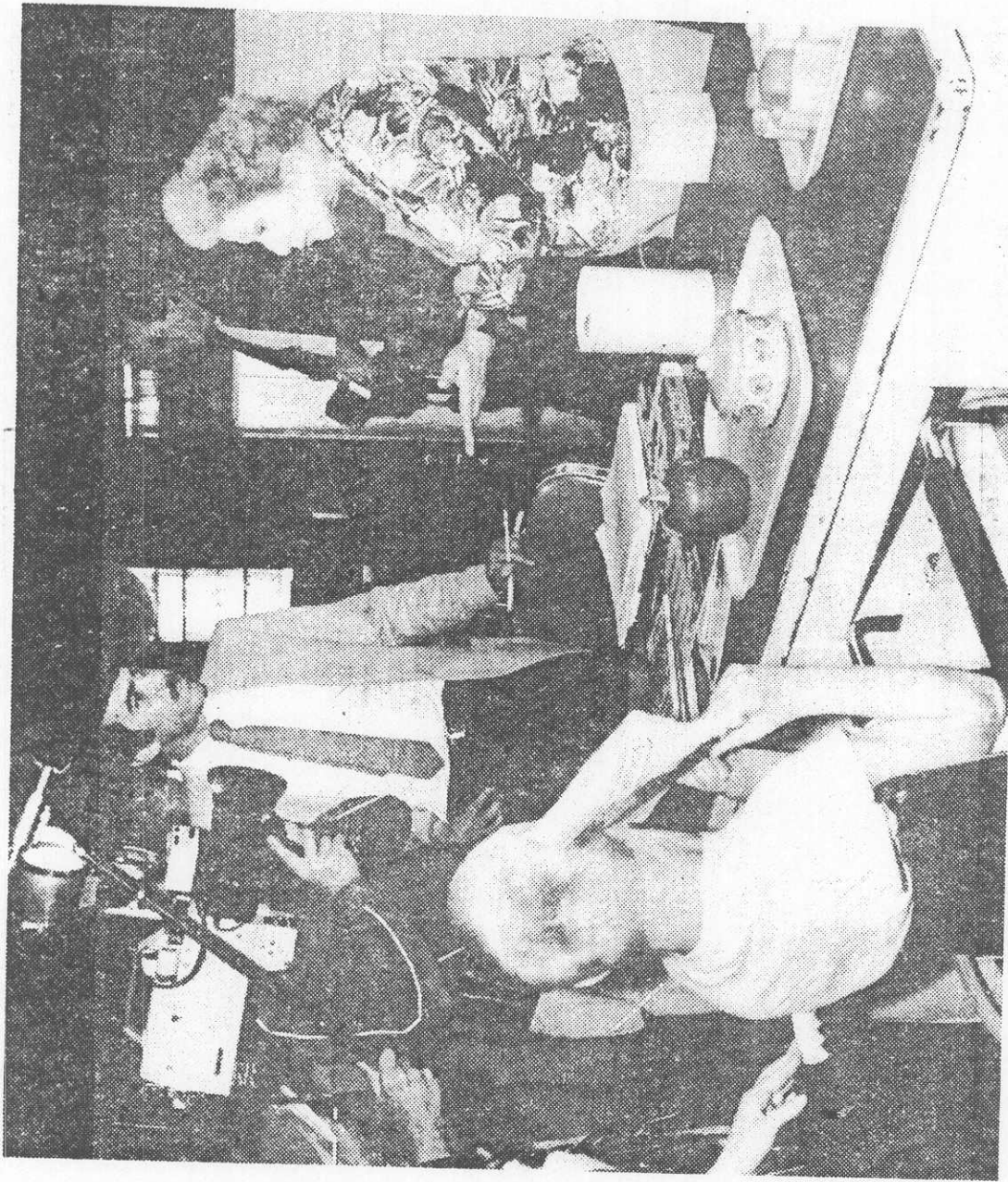
In the gymnasium of Building 8, employees said 104 retarded patients clambered over soft plastic geometric sculptures each day. Asked why some of the male patients had scabs and bruises on their faces, an employee said, "Many of the clients who are very low-functioning scratch themselves, or they fight."

In Building 6, totally empty of patients, single beds covered with identical green spreads stood in concrete cubicles. The bedboards were labeled with patients' names, handwritten on masking tape. The walls were bare, except for neatly taped state-issue posters, bearing slogans like "I Love New York" or Health Department admonitions to eat cereal.

Although each cubicle was equipped with a wooden closet, none of the closets had anything to wear in it. "You have to remember that our clients are low-functioning," Dr. Curry said. "They rip off their clothes and even chew on them." Garments, she said, were issued from a central storage area.

As the tour group strolled through the maze of Building 6, monochromatic color schemes succeeded each other — blue in the first room, orange walls through the next door, and lime green on every inch of a third room.

Helen McNally, a mid-level supervisor who has worked at Willowbrook since 1948 and an outspoken grandmother, welcomed the dazzling television lights and scribbling reporters' pencils in Building 10.



Helen McNally, right, tells reporters about conditions in the Staten Island Developmental Center.

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