

# Mentally handicapped: A helping hand is ready

A helping hand is readily available for Staten Islanders who are physically or mentally handicapped.

The Island is recognized throughout the state for its work with mentally retarded individuals, although that recognition has not always been positive.

This is the home of the former Willowbrook State School, once termed a "snake pit" by the late Robert F. Kennedy. Only a decade ago, the institution, which then housed more than 6,000 patients, was damned for its "caretaker" philosophy which allowed patients to roam naked in dirty and overcrowded buildings.

Storms of protest from the community and a flurry of lawsuits resulted in dramatic changes.

Willowbrook, since renamed the Staten Island Developmental Center, now houses only about 700 patients, and they are provided with training and support services. The grounds of SIDC include a respite center, where parents may bring their retarded children for a few days if they cannot be cared for at home; a drop-in center for retarded children, which operates 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day; and the Institute for Basic Research in Mental Retardation.

The SIDC is not accepting new admissions. For families or per-

sons that need information about services which are open for new clients, the first step might be contacting the Staten Island Developmental Services Office, 26 Dumont Ave., Dongan Hills. Operated by the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, the service will direct patients to appropriate agencies; call 351-7701 between 9 a.m. and noon, Monday through Friday.

Agencies which provide diagnostic, referral, residential and/or treatment services for the handicapped include:

- Association for Help of Retarded Children, which operates two group homes on Staten Is-

land: A group home for eight developmentally disabled adults on Tysen Street in West Brighton and another home for eight on the grounds of the Staten Island Developmental Center.

- Association for Advancement of Blind and Retarded in Dongan Hills houses eight adults who are blind and severely retarded.

- Child Study Center of New York, 1657 Victory Blvd., Castleton Corners. Works with children 2½ to 16 years who are learning disabled or have behavior disorders. A half-day program is open for pre-school children; a day program is for children ages 6 to 16. Affiliated

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with the American Montessori Society.

● **Committee on the Handicapped**, sponsored by the City Board of Education. An evaluation and placement team of social workers, psychiatrists and educational evaluators who work with public school students in their home school. For more information, contact the school principal.

● **Downs Syndrome Foundation**, 10 Joline Lane, Tottenville. A school for children with Downs Syndrome, commonly known as mongolism.

● **Eden II**, based at Bayley Seton Hospital, Building 2. A school for autistic and autistic-like children ages 5 to 21. An adult training program is geared to autistic persons age 21 and older. Both programs operate daily sessions from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

● **Job Path**, 22 W. 38th St., Manhattan. Places developmentally disabled adults age 18 and older in clerical, janitorial, hospital orderly, mail room, messenger and food service work. Clients are paid minimum wage and receive on-the-job training.

● **Richmond Occupational Training**, 155 Tompkins Ave., Clifton. Under the wing of the City Board of Education, the agency provides educational and occupational training for about 225 developmentally and physically handicapped young adults, age 15½ to 21.

● **Seaside School**, based at South Beach Psychiatric Center, Building C. A school operated by the City Board of Education for autistic children ages 5 to 21.

● **Staten Island Aid**, based at Bayley Seton Hospital. A comprehensive program for the developmentally disabled.

An educational program at 1150 Castleton Ave., West Brighton, teaches basic developmental skills to about 33 school-age children who are profoundly or severely retarded and multi-handicapped. Includes a Saturday recreational program.

● **The Stephen O'Halek Day Treatment Center**, 550 Bay St., Stapleton, teaches independent living skills and provides pre-vocational training for about 50 adults.

● **The Mary Campbell Ellis Vocational Training Center**, 15 Bay St., St. George, provides occupational training and sheltered workshops for about 154 clients.

The organization also operates two group homes, one on the grounds of the Staten Island Developmental Center for eight adults and the other at 750 Page Ave., Tottenville, for six residents.

● **Staten Island Center for Developmental Disabilities**, operated by the Staten Island Mental Health Society, 669 Castleton Ave., Randall Manor.

**Outpatient services, at 657 Castleton Ave., Randall Manor**, are open to developmentally disabled of all ages, provides diagnostic and evaluation services, individual and family counseling, referrals, program consultations and individual school consultation.

Early childhood programs include: A diagnostic/therapeutic nursery operating five days a week between 2 and 5 with development problems in speech, motor coordination and/or social skills; and the Early Intervention Guided Home Training, providing on-site and home visits by a multi-disciplinary team, for children from birth to 3 years with severely delayed development.

A school for children with learning disabilities, for students age 4½ to 7, is conducted at P.S. 25 Annex with the joint sponsorship of the City Board of Education.

Infant evaluation service, based at **Chait Memorial Center**, 559 Castleton Ave., Randall Manor, provides evaluation for children under 4 years of age.

● **Staten Island Chapter, Muscular Dystrophy Association**, 78 Guyon Ave., Oakwood, provides referral services.

● **United Cerebral Palsy of New York City** has an office at South Beach Psychiatric Center providing diagnostic and treatment services for physically handicapped and developmentally disabled persons of all ages. A sheltered workshop at Oswald Building, 105 Jersey St., New Brighton, offers vocational rehabilitation and job placement for developmentally disabled and physically handicapped adults.

The agency also has a community residence for 20 adults at 185 St. Marks Pl., St. George.

● **United Cerebral Palsy of New York State** operates the **Karl Warner Center** on the grounds of the Staten Island Developmental Center in Willowbrook. The Warner Center services 308 severely and profoundly retarded who also have significant physical handicaps. The **Nina Eaton Center** at South Beach Psychiatric is like the Warner Center, but smaller, serving 54 patients.

UCP of New York State also operates five four-bed apartments on Staten Island for developmentally disabled adults.

● **Very Special Place**, 241 New Dorp Lane, New Dorp. Operates a day treatment program to teach independent living skills to about 50 developmentally disabled adults 21 years and older. A community center, which serves about 100 developmentally disabled clients age 18 and older, provides evening recreational and classes.

● **Volunteers of America** operates a group home at Arlington Terrace Apartments, Mariners Harbor, plus apartments for the developmentally disabled.