

# 'There's limit to human compassion'

## An inside view of the SIDC

*Editor's note: Ed Stanley, whose brother is a client at the Staten Island Developmental Center, feels reports focusing on the SIDC and care for the mentally deficient give an unrealistic account and offers this "inside view."*

**By ED STANLEY**

For years I've heard horror stories about the Staten Island Developmental Center (formerly Willowbrook State School). Cru-

sading newscasters or reporters, eager for a story, tell of inmates (now called "clients") running around naked, drugged into a stupor or sitting in pools of urine.

I've been told about overcrowding, sexual abuse, unsanitary conditions, outbreaks of serious illnesses, staffing problems and have even heard rumors about clients being used as experimental guinea pigs.

These stories have affected

me more than the average person, because I have a brother in the Staten Island Developmental Center. Frankly, I'm fed up with auditors, newscasters and so-called investigative reporters who broadcast "exposes" without the slightest knowledge of what it is like to care for a mentally deficient, yet physically capable person.

It is time the public got a more realistic view of the problems involved in caring for the

mentally retarded, but not from a reporter who has half an hour's worth of "experience."

I have a few horror stories of my own. We tried to keep my brother home. Imagine the mind of an 18-month-old baby in the body of a strapping adolescent — a "baby" who urinates in neighbors' yards, slaps sleeping family members in the face to wake them up, jumps out of a car in the middle of traffic, throws his sister's eyeglasses out the window, sets things on fire and attempts to throw his baby brother out the window.

Imagine other children living in the same household trying to lead normal lives — chasing a naked 11-year-old down the street or keeping him out of garbage pails.

We had padlocks on all the doors, including the infant's nursery. If there had been a fire, I could not have gotten to the baby in time. But the padlocks did not stop my brother, who climbed out of the window any-way.

We tried putting him in special classes. The teacher kept

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