



Discussing the progress of the 10-year-old Pouch Center for Special People, are, from left, Dr. Gerald M. Spielman, director of the center; Arthur Webb, commissioner of the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities; Elizabeth W. Pouch, who chairs the center's executive committee, and Mark Marcario, president of the board of the Staten Island Mental Health Society.

S.I. Advance Photo by Steve Zaffarano

Center for disabled marks anniversary

Ten years ago, President Gerald Ford was starting his administration, Abraham Beame was Mayor of New York, and the Staten Island Center for Developmental Disabilities was created at the Staten Island Mental Health Society's West Brighton facility.

Yesterday, the center, now known as the Elizabeth W. Pouch Center for Special People, celebrated its 10th anniversary with a party for 150 staff members and friends.

"It has been an eventful decade," Dr. Gerald Spielman, di-

rector of the Pouch Center, said before the party at the Chait Memorial Center next door. "And I hope the next 10 years are even more eventful."

The staff at the Pouch Center (which was renamed last year) has grown from 15 to 50 people. Dr. Spielman said the addition of new programs such as special instruction for retarded parents and a pre-school nursery have allowed the center to evaluate and treat more than 3,500 Staten Islanders.

Dr. Spielman said the Mental Health Society hopes to renovate the home of the Pouch Center and expand some of its more popular programs. "I think the future will be good to us," he said. "We're all eager to keep helping our neighbors on Staten Island."