

munity beds are available. Moreover, the union is upset over a recent state report which advocates contracting with private agencies for community-based services rather than operating the services with state employees.

Madarasz says the CSEA would like to stem the layoffs by opening either state-operated group homes on the grounds of SIDC or by establishing state-operated day programs on the Island.

"The layoffs start in May and we're not going to stop them, but maybe we can limit them to 700 or 500," Madarasz said. "We view 1,400 as a worse-case scenario."

But Madarasz conceded that the chances of establishing group homes on the SIDC grounds are slim. While the state Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities plans to open a 72-bed complex on the southeast corner of the SIDC campus, it has frowned on suggestions of building more residences on the site. OMRDD has already declared its intention to turn the bulk of the Willowbrook property over to the state for redevelopment.

The union submitted its plan for state-operated group homes to a task force studying disposition of the surplus property.

But the union's plan has not been pursued aggressively, Madarasz acknowledged, and "we're not very optimistic" that the plan will be adopted.

However, an agreement on hiring laid-off SIDC employees could be negotiated with College of Staten Island, a leading contender to acquire most of the SIDC campus, according to Tyrone Daniels, president of the SIDC local of the CSEA, and Assemblywoman Elizabeth Connelly.

Mrs. Connelly, who attended yesterday's brunch, said transferring state employees from SIDC to the college is one possibility, but it is still in the early stages of discussion.

Another possibility for the laid-off employees is early retirement, Mrs. Connelly said. "The state budget office screams whenever we mention early retirement, but maybe here we can work something out," she said. "There are people at SIDC who have worked there for 25 or 30 years but they don't qualify for retirement because they haven't reached age 55.

"I had a man in my office the other day who started at SIDC when he was 19 and he's been there 31 years. What's he going to do now? Retraining isn't going to do much for a person like that."