

Some very special Islanders

By **MARTHA BENDIX**
and **TOM FLANNAGAN**

If you think there was excitement among Staten Island Special Olympians last month when they learned that Chase Manhattan Bank was awarding its \$3,000 Neighborhood Grant three weeks ahead of schedule so the 25 athletes could travel to the State Games in Syracuse in their own bus, you should talk to them now. Or better yet, talk to the volunteers who went with them.

"The kids were just wonderful," **Herman Fishman**, volunteer extraordinaire, whose wife **Louise** is the Staten Island Special Olympics fund-raising chairperson. "We had eight gold medal winners and the relay team won the gold for the sixth consecutive year, equaling its own track record of last year."

Sounding like a proud grandfather, **Herman** gave us these results, assuring us that there were many other award recipients and all the youngsters came home winners: 1st place relay — **Patrick Boles**, **Carlin Hurlson**, **Wilfred Colon** and **Dennis Verderosa**; backstroke (gold) **Kim Korzekowinski**; softball (gold) **Bobby Ecmann**; 50-meter run (gold) **Jerry Cohn**, and 200-meter run (gold) **Rudy Johnson**.

We happen to think there are several other stars in the group — the wonderful volunteers who make this experience possible for our special athletes and were an essential part of the Staten Island team: **Joanne Certo** of United Cerebral Palsy; **Lois Dwyer** and **Helen Settles**, special education teachers; **Bill Blumoehr**, A Very Special Place; **Curtis Smith**, Wilbrook School; **Peggy Cuddihy**, the bowling coach; **Richie Sallardi**, coordinator of the Staten Island Special Olympics, and **Eileen Dennis** of the North Shore Rescue Squad, who, **Herman** tells us, is wherever she is needed at any time of the day and night. And, of course, the **Fishmans** wouldn't miss a game.

Actually, we think they're all pretty special people of whom Staten Island can be very proud.