

## Layout conveyed wrong impression

One of the most damaging and mistaken perceptions of people who are mentally retarded is that they are mentally ill also. In fact, this notion is so widespread that many think the two automatically go together.

As a social service professional with extensive experience in the field of developmental disabilities, it was quite disconcerting to see the layout of the first page of the Lifestyle section in the Sunday March 15 edition of the Advance. Two articles by Anne Silverstein, one above the other, juxtaposed these two issues creating the mistaken impression that they are one or at least closely connected.

The lead article addressed the construction of community-based group homes on the grounds of the Staten Island Developmental Center institution. As indicated, there is opposition, considerable in fact, to the state for failing to develop true community residences that are unclustered and away from the site of a facility with a nationwide reputation of notorious proportions.

This failure is due in large part to professional ignorance and community opposition based upon the fallacy of inextricably connecting mental retardation and mental illness. . . .

**BOB DOMINA**  
St. George