

Report conveyed wrong impression

On behalf of a group of parents of the Staten Island Divisions of the Association for the Help of Retarded Children, I am expressing their concern of a phase of your reporting of the Jennifer Schweiger tragedy.

The trauma of this heinous crime impacted on all of us but the depth of the tragedy had a special impact of fear on the parents of the Developmentally Disabled. It has taken a long time to shake the fear of allowing our children to share the benefits of an "open society" and overlook unfounded bias.

There was a line of your reporting that cast a pall on the acceptance we seek — you identified the accused as "slightly retarded." This was without basis that and lent itself to the suspicion that retardation and criminality are synonymous. It was an unnecessary and unverified description.

Subsequent information has confirmed that the accused is fully competent — but you never corrected a description that was not genuine.

HERMAN FISHMAN
Meiers Corner

[The writer is vice president/Staten Island for the New York chapter of the Association for the Help of Retarded Children.]