

SIDC equipment put to use

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Silhouetted by the autumn sun on the grounds of the Holy Family R.C. Church in Westerleigh yesterday was a hospital walker, two wheelchairs, a dollhouse, an assortment of toddler's toys, therapeutic mats and stacks of books. And the Friends of Jennifer.

The therapeutic equipment was free to anyone who needed or wanted it. More than 50 people showed up to claim some of it. The Friends of Jennifer, the group that had originally come

together to help search for Jennifer Schweiger, continued their good works yesterday afternoon.

Donna Cutugno, the head of Friends for Jennifer, had worked with officials of the Staten Island Developmental Center, where the equipment had been stored for years. She was able to get it released so it could be put to good use by those with handicaps.

Mrs. Cutugno, who is also the mother of a disabled child, her 4-year-old son Devin suffers from cerebral palsy) helped organize the giveaway. Beginning at noon,

the group gathered to bring the cumbersome equipment over to the church's outdoor parking lot, pitching in with station wagons and individual cars. Before the appointed hour of 2 p.m., reports Mrs. Cutugno, "People started arriving at 1:30, and by 3 p.m. most of the goods to be distributed were."

A wheelchair was taken by a neighbor of Frances Auriti of Oakwood. "My neighbor was just diagnosed as having muscular dystrophy. I think he'll need it," who was loading the chair into her car.

Some nurses from the pediatric

learning disabled son.

In all, 10 volunteers from the Friends of Jennifer helped carry out the day's good deeds. Next on the group's agenda is a program to fingerprint all handicapped children on the Island, and to gain sponsors, as well, to support the Staten Island Special Athletes program.

After the church giveaway finished at 3:30, Donna and Charles Cutugno, along with their 2-year-old daughter, Irina and 4-year-old Devin, joined other parents of disabled children at Country Lanes, the Dongan Hills bowling alley, where the Special Athletes group were bowling. In all, 74 children

joined in the fun, siblings of the disabled as well as disabled children.

In one touching moment, Devin got a strike and he smiled broadly. His father smiled back, then hugged him. It was obvious that his son, a victim of cerebral palsy, felt good about being able to play sports.

A coach for the Special Athletes group, Chuck Diaz, says they're starting a soccer clinic and track and field events. "We just returned from Amsterdam, N.Y., where our group won the New York State Championship, Division I of the Special Olympics," Diaz announced proudly.

rics office of the local hospital took a good deal of the instructive books, and almost all of the table laden with toys "for the tots who must sit in our waiting room." One elderly woman selected a therapy mat, a gentleman an inflatable beanbag, still another took one of the therapy rolls.

A bulk of the equipment was taken by the Staten Island Special Athletes, a group which had all of its equipment stolen earlier in the day, according to spokesman Ronnie Micciulla. Mats, a chair, an air mattress machine, were some of the items obtained through the Friends of Jennifer, said Micciulla, the mother of one