

# Retardation Council outlines goals for care of the disabled

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The Staten Island Retardation and Disabilities Council presented its three targets to ensure that the "continuum of care" to meet the needs of the borough's developmentally disabled will be met. It did so at its sixth annual Legislative Luncheon last Friday at the Staaten Restaurant in West Brighton.

Diane Buglioli, the chairman of the council, in presenting the council's position papers to those present, said, "Although there are issues of continuing concern to us, such as transportation and the development of residential beds in the community, we have chosen to focus on three main targets because of their immediate and profound impact on the Staten Island community."

The first dealt with plans for the Elizabeth Connelly Resource Center, to be located on the grounds of the former Willowbrook Hospital site.

Buglioli said, "We have before us an opportunity to create a unique and exciting place which can provide many resources to the citizens of Staten Island who are developmentally disabled."

"However, it is the position of the council that the development of programs at the center should not replace development in the community at large and should follow the process that has been utilized on Staten Island."

## Process outlined by chairman

Buglioli explained, "The process is that, when a need is identified, a request for proposals is issued and the responses are reviewed by council-with the appropriate governmental agencies."

The second area of concern to the council, she said, is the shifting of program development responsibilities from city to state.

Buglioli urged the legislators, "Local government must be a legal entity which shares responsibility with state government for the delivery of services to residents of New York City who are developmentally disabled."

"We urge you to support legislation that establishes the Borough Councils, such as ours, to be the source of local community input into the planning and ongoing developing process of the state's Office of Mental Retardation-Developmental Disabilities," she said.

Finally, she said, the council was calling for an appropriation of \$2 million in the city budget for the fiscal year 1989 to be allocated as follows: \$1 million for program expansion, \$500,000 for salary increases, and \$500,000 for inflation of existing contracts.

Buglioli noted, "Recent state budget allocations have allowed for an increase in the salaries for direct-care workers in residential programs which are state-financed."

"However, there has not been an allocation in the city budget to provide a like increase for the workforce financed through the city."

## A promise to fight for funds

Assemblywoman Elizabeth Connelly (D-S.I.), the chairman of Mental Retardation-Developmental Disabilities, promised to continue the battle for funds for both salaries and programs.

She warned, "We will be competing with several other agencies out there, and it will be a tough battle just to hang on to what we've got."

Connelly urged the council to keep up its advocacy fight.

"We've won a lot. In fact I am known as 'the Pool Lady' around the state for having got funds for an Olympic-sized pool at the new center. Others are putting it in their plans as well around the state."

Sandra Williams, the assistant commissioner of the New York City Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation Services, stressed the need for the council to be flexible.

"Aim to get as much as you can; but if you have to take a little at a time, be prepared for that, too. This council has come a long way, and you can be proud of your history," she said.