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ADVANCE PHOTO ■ MIKE FALCO

A Very Special Place league manager Mike Endress, furthest from the camera, poses with keglers, from the left, Ida Washington, Susan Gibbin, Pat Hutchins, Pepe Rodriguez, Willie Franco and Emma Mae Saunders.

Special league, special people

■ **Dedicated workers help A Very Special Place loop make a difference for developmentally disabled adults**

If you ever happened upon the A Very Special Place bowling loop Saturday mornings at Rab's Country Lanes, you would see the name is appropriate.

For all but two or three weeks of the year, 64 developmentally disabled adults take to the lanes for 2½ hours of fun under the guidance of Mike Endress, the loop's manager.

Executive director Genevieve Benoit and Deputy Executive Director Diane Buglioli are the founders of the Dongan Hills-based agency, which is celebrating its silver anniversary this year.

"Going back they didn't like what they saw (how the developmentally disabled were being treated)," explained Endress. "They knew of the need to bring these adults into the community, and I pretty much consider them pioneers."

Endress, too, has been a pioneer of sorts.

"Mike has been the first and only bowling manager we've had, so much of what has happened has been because of Mike's efforts," said Buglioli.

Maureen Brennick, the Associate Executive Director of the agency, who oversees all of the community support and senior services, says Endress has been a tremendous asset to the agency.

