

Gazing toward the well-kept house with a long driveway, Loriann Santangelo and Kelly Campione, who are sisters, recall a block party, held two years ago.

"They were all outside for the magic show. We set it up right in front of their house," says Mrs. Santangelo, the mother of a 7-year-old daughter who has cerebral palsy and could need a similar residence when she grows up.

Ms. Campione, the mother of Michael, 8, and Thomas, 5, says she has no reason to shelter her sons from disabled people. On Halloween, the children trick-or-treat there just as they would at any other house.

Another woman who frequently visits her parents' home on Madsen Avenue recalls a time when staff members helped her father, who was ailing from emphysema.

"We ran for help and a nurse came with an oxygen tank," recalls Elaina Crema of Basking Ridge, N.J.

South Beach

Of nearly a dozen residents interviewed near a South Beach home for the developmentally disabled on McClean Avenue, none had anything negative to report.

Run by On Your Mark, a private not-for-profit human services provider, the home opened in 1992. Fights, unsupervised outings, excessive trash — all are non-existent there, say area residents.

Great Kills

Back on Nash Court, in Great Kills, a couple of residents still harbor ill feelings toward their developmentally disabled neighbors.

A woman hurriedly ushering her young sons into her home says children shouldn't be exposed to retarded people, but admits those down the block have not caused problems.

Another woman who lives next door to the Nash Court community residence says horn blowing wakes her at 7:30 a.m. every morning. The Advance didn't help keep the home from opening in 1991, so the woman will not answer any more questions, she says, slamming her front door shut.

Now, as Ms. Sweeney, the mother of four, who initially protested the home, does her spring cleaning, she thinks of the developmentally disabled living across the street.

When her daughters were ready to part with a box full of old toys, the mom encouraged, Tara, 8 and Dana, 9, to deliver the items to the disabled people's doorstep.

"There's all kinds of people in the world," says Ms. Sweeney. "Sometimes they don't come out perfect. But I tell my kids, God made everyone."

No formal complaints

Staten Island's three community boards and City Council members say they have no complaints on record from neighbors of existing community residences for the developmentally disabled.

Likewise, there are no complaints registered with the Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Services Office (SIDDSO), the local arm of the state, said an agency spokeswoman.

The SIDDSO serves as the clearing house for complaints and can be reached by calling 983-5200.