

Down's Learning Center to close

But founder hasn't given up

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Teri Russo started a poem recently. She calls it "Requiem for a Dream."

An Advance Woman of Achievement in 1988, Ms. Russo is watching one of her dreams come undone, a casualty of changing social priorities.

Twenty years ago she founded the Down's Syndrome Learning Center on Staten Island and 15 years ago expanded it from an infant stimulation program to include training and academics for school-age youngsters with Down's syndrome, a form of congenital retardation.

While state funds help support the infant program, the school-age classes rely on tuition from parents and donations from the public. Now, those donations have dried up.

"We can no longer afford to keep this program going," Ms. Russo said.

In the last few years, there's been a shift in donations to the homeless and AIDS (Acquired Im-



Teri Russo helps her son, Damian, with his reading.

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