



In the early childhood program in Staten Island Mental Health Society's Center for Special People, Jason, teacher Andrea Canu, Jennifer, Yimny, teacher Linda Trentacosta and Anthony enjoy the learning experience.

Page 1 of 3

Agencies serve retarded, developmentally disabled

BY ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

A sad chapter in the state's treatment of the mentally retarded ended in September, 1987 when the Staten Island Developmental Center — the former Willowbrook State School — closed its doors.

Willowbrook during the early 1970s was crowded with thousands of patients. As many as 6,000 people were jammed in the understaffed and unsanitary institution. Media investigations followed by a class action suit revealed the horror of Willowbrook to the public.

In 1975, as a result of that class action filed in 1972, a federal judge ordered the state to move Willowbrook residents into group homes. Deadlines through the years went unmet by the state and the settlement terms were extended.

A final settlement between the state and the plaintiffs requires that all former Willowbrook residents and those who are still living at the facility be placed in group homes by 1992.

Of past Willowbrook clients, 110 remain on the grounds in Executive Way, a complex of group homes. The others have either moved into community facilities elsewhere or other developmental centers. By 1992, those in these centers will go to group homes.

To continue to serve the mentally retarded, the state has retained about 175 acres of land from the old institution's 300-acre site. Now called the Richmond Complex, it holds the Institute for Basic Research, small group homes, administrative buildings and the Elizabeth A.

Connelly Community Resource Center — a clearinghouse of information and services located at 1150 Forest Hill Rd., Willowbrook. Phone: 983-5352 or 983-5415.

The approximately 200 acres of the site remaining will become the new campus of the College of Staten Island. The college plans to consolidate its Sunnyside and St. George campuses on the Willowbrook site by the end of 1994.

The college, the institute and the Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Services Office will work jointly to establish the Center for Developmental Neurosciences. It will generate interdisciplinary research and grant programs, technical, non-degree and related training and offer professional supervision for field and clinical staff.

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The Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities offers a number of services at the Richmond Complex, including a respite/drop-in center.

The respite center offers parents a place to leave retarded children for up to 30 days a year if they cannot be cared for at home. The drop-in center, a day program, operates from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day.

For families who need information about island services, contact the Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Information Exchange at the Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Services Office (DDSO), 26 Dumont Ave., Dongan Hills. Phone: 351-7701 or 983-5352, be-

tween 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The information and referral service acts as a central directory of services for the retarded and developmentally disabled on Staten Island.

DDSO provides a number of services including case management, drop-in/respite services, homemaker services and crisis intervention. The last can be contacted at 351-7730, or after business hours at 983-5200.

The following is a list of agencies which provide diagnostic, referral, residential, and/or treatment services for mentally retarded and developmentally disabled people:

• Association for Children with Retarded Mental Development operates a group home and a sheltered workshop for mentally retarded and developmentally disabled adults. The agency can be reached at 494-7542.

• Association for the Help of Retarded Children operates two adult group homes, one on the grounds of the former Staten Island Developmental Center and the other at Petersen House, 200 Tysen St., New Brighton. It also operates a Saturday recreation program for young adults in St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Eltingville, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., followed by a pre-school recreation program from 1 to 3 p.m.

It also offers an overnight respite program and maintains a parents assistance committee and parent support

group. For information on all of the association's services, call Rachelle Grossman at (212) 254-8203, extension 204.

• A Very Special Place, 1439 Hylan Blvd., Dongan Hills, operates day treatment programs which include clinical and support services for people age 21 and over, and has a community center which can provide a recreational/socialization program for those 18 and over.

Day treatment programs are offered at sites on Neilson Avenue in Great Kills and New Dorp Lane, New Dorp. A senior citizens' program on Seaview Avenue, Dongan Hills, includes transportation, for those 55 and older. In addition, a TeleRide program provides clients with transportation to program centers and elsewhere. Phone: 987-1234.

• Catholic Guardian Society operates a geriatric group home for the aged developmentally disabled on Dresden Place, Todt Hill. Phone: 212-371-1000, ext. 2300.

• The Child Study Center of New York, 285 Clove Rd., West Brighton, is a special education program for pre-schoolers. For information call 442-6588.

• Committee on Special Education (CSE), a subdivision of the city Board of Education's Division of Special Education, offers evaluation and school placement for physically and mentally handicapped children from kindergarten to age 21. The committee places students in various special-education programs. They can be reached at 816-1900.

• The Down's Syndrome Learning

Center provides infant stimulation and pre-school programs for Down's Syndrome children. It also has a parents' support group and a variety of after-school programs, including a Cub Scouts troop for handicapped boys. The center provides year-round programming including youth baseball. Phone: 347-8277.

• Early Childhood Direction Center in Brooklyn is an information and referral service for handicapped children. The state-funded center assists in finding programs for children from newborn to age 5. Phone: 604-6412, or contact them through Downstate Medical Center, 270-1000.

• Eden II School for Autistic Children, at Bayley Seton Hospital, provides classroom instruction, adaptive physical education, speech therapy, psychological and social services, parent training, and an adult training program. For school-age children, ages 5 to 21; the adult program serves clients older than 21. For more information, call 816-1422.

• Jewish Community Center of Staten Island (JCC), 485 Victory Blvd., Tompkinsville, offers programs for infants and pre-school children with developmental needs. Services and transportation are free.

Children at Play, for infants through 3 years old, provides a special education teacher in the home and diagnostic, therapeutic and instructional services at the center. Phone: Linda Salmon at 727-8257.

(Continued on next page)

Page 2 of 3

Newcomers' guide

Handicapped

(From previous page)

First Foot Forward assists pre-school children through assessment, therapy and a special education teacher who works with both children and parents at the J.C.C. Phone: Sheila Lipton at 727-7257.

● Muscular Dystrophy Association provides patient services through its Manhattan office, (212) 557-9450, and referrals through its Queens office, 793-1100.

● North Richmond Community Mental Health Center's Community Treatment Clinic, based at Bayley Seton Hospital, addresses mental health needs of mentally retarded and developmentally disabled people ages 16 and up. Clients are seen individually and in group sessions, and families are also offered support. For more information, call 390-1626.

● On Your Mark is a community-based program providing therapeutic recreation, family support services, holiday trips and respite getaways. It serves persons with special needs, from pre-schoolers through adults. Activities are scheduled after school, evenings and on weekends at 12 sites on Staten Island. The agency also sponsors a cooperative summer camp program with the Jewish Community Center called Camp Tikvah. For more information, call 720-9233 or 981-1500 and ask for Dana Rydel.

● Our F.L.A.C.E. School is a pre-school for speech impaired, developmentally delayed and hearing disabled children ages 2½ through 5. It also serves the hearing impaired men. It is re-

tarded and children with other handicaps through speech, occupational, physical and music therapy and creative dramatics. Phone: 987-9400.

● PS 37 moved from South Beach Psychiatric Center to the former Barnes Intermediate School annex at 15 Fairfield St., Great Kills. It serves autistic, developmentally disabled and emotionally disturbed children age 5 to 21, as well as those with multiple handicaps. The telephone number is 984-9800; the principal is Nancy Burri.

● R.E.A.C.H. Program, sponsored by the city Parks and Recreation Department, provides recreation, athletics and creative arts to handicapped persons ages 6 and up. Programs are scheduled after school, evenings and Saturdays, in addition to a summer day camp. For more information, call 720-1555 in the afternoons or evenings.

● Richmond Association for the Developmentally Disabled in Dongan Hills provides weekend trips, bowling, theater, movies and restaurant outings for people 17 and older. It also operates a parent support group. Phone the Russo, president, Christine

● Richmond Occupational Training Center in Clifton is a Board of Education program that provides secondary educational and occupational training for developmentally and physically handicapped young adults ages 14 through 21. The center can be reached at 278-8425.

● Seton Foundation for Learning, 164 Gordon Street, Staten Island, employs a number of work-

is a 10-month special education program for developmentally disabled children ages 5 through 14. For information, call 447-1750.

● The Special Education program of District 31, located at 211 Daniel Low Terr., St. George, serves children ages 4 to 14 who have been certified as handicapped by the Board of Education's Committee on Special Education. Children ages 15 and above are served through local high schools. Elementary and intermediate-school-level instruction is provided for disabled and handicapped children, as are counseling and speech services. Phone: 448-9600.

● Staten Island Aid, also based at Bayley Seton Hospital, Building 3, sponsors a variety of programs for the mentally retarded, all of which include psychological and social services, speech therapy and training in self-help skills. Programs include a pre-school for youngsters at the hospital, ages 3 to 5, who are developmentally delayed, and a Saturday recreation program at 500 Seaview Ave., Ocean View. A similar program is offered during the summer.

● The Stephen O'Halek Day Treatment Center, 500 Seaview Ave., teaches independent living skills and provides pre-vocational training for about 70 adults, ages 21 and up.

● The Mary Campbell Ellis Vocational Training Center, 215 Bay St., Tompkinsville, provides occupational training and sheltered workshops for about 165 clients. AITDO, a division of Staten Island Aid, employs a number of work-

shop clients who assemble framed prints that are distributed nationally.

● Staten Island Aid also runs four group homes on Staten Island for developmentally disabled adults, and plans to open a fifth late this year. For information about these services, call 447-5200.

● Staten Island Center for Independent Living in Sea View is a non-resident resource center with free or low-cost programs for disabled people of all ages. Services include personal care attendants, interpreters for the deaf, a program for hearing-impaired people, advocacy, community education, transportation, financial management, housing assistance, independent living skills and other kinds of counseling and recreation.

Many of the staff members are disabled themselves. For more information, phone 667-1200 or (TTY) 667-0825.

● The Staten Island Mental Health Society at 669 Castleton Ave., West Brighton, offers a number of programs for the developmentally disabled and mentally retarded.

● The Elizabeth W. Pouch Center for Special People provides outpatient services including individualized diagnosis and evaluation, family and group therapy, early childhood programs, including a five-day-a-week nursery for children ages 2 to 5, and a day intervention Guided Home Training (EIGHT), which offers therapy through a multi-disciplinary team for children from birth to 3 years with severely delayed development.

● The center also offers the T.I.P.S. (Training in Parenting Skills) program for mentally retarded adults who have children. For information about Pouch Cen-

ter programs, call 448-9775.

● Staten Island Retardation and Disabilities Council is a consortium of agencies, parents and interested individuals whose goal is to see that programs are available to meet the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. The council provides information, referrals and advocacy, and sponsors events to foster understanding of people with developmental disabilities. It advises the New York City Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Alcoholism Services. Phone: 983-5354.

● Staten Island Special Olympics provides training clubs and sports activities for all handicapped people on a weekly basis. The phone is 356-0901.

● Topsy is a home-based program serving infants and children from birth to age 3 who have any type of developmental problem, including social and emotional problems. A psychologist and a social worker provide speech and occupational therapy. There is a charge for services. Phone: 727-1515 between 8:30 a.m. and 3 p.m.

● Tourette Syndrome Association, Queens, is a national association that acts as an information and referral agency. Phone: 291-2999.

● United Cerebral Palsy of New York City provides infant stimulation, education, day treatment, and vocational and home

rehabilitation. It operates a group home on Staten Island for developmentally disabled adults, an adult rehabilitation center and programs for infants, pre-school and school-age children. Phone: 442-5615, and ask for Rhona Hanshaft, Staten Island Borough coordinator, or Michael Moroch, workshops coordinator.

● Volunteers of America Developmental Services operates nine community residences on Staten Island for mentally retarded adults and operates a pre-school and infant stimulation program for developmentally disabled children under 5 years old. Phone 448-4730.

The following parent support groups also are available in addition to those affiliated with a specific agency.

● Benevolent Society for Retarded Children, Staten Island office, 983-5204.

● Prader-Willi Parent Group, for parents of children with Prader-Willi Syndrome, an eating disease. Call Rita Welch, president, at 767-6077.

● Richmond Occupational Training Center Parent-Teacher Association, 273-8622.

● Staten Island Parents of Hearing Impaired. Call Jane Milza at 447-5003.

● Talking Over and Understanding Children with Handicaps (TOUCH). Call Gail Checkett at 73-1613.

Page 3 of 3