



ADVANCE PHOTO/STEVE ZAFFARANO

Enjoying the fund-raising breakfast are, from the left, Mario Esposito, county clerk; Fiorello Cicero, Staten Island chairman of the State Employees Federated Appeal; Robert Witkowsky, and Thomas Clark, SEFA chairman.

## State employees begin fund drive

By CRAIG SCHNEIDER  
ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

The Staten Island chapter of the State Employees Federated Appeal (SEFA), which provides money to help the needy, kicked off its fifth annual fund-raising drive yesterday at a breakfast ceremony.

Staten Island chairman Fiorello Cicero promised once again to raise the cash for local non-profit agencies, which provides money for services ranging from meals for housebound elderly to medical treatment for poor families.

Cicero told the 90 organizers at the Country Club Diner in Grasmere that last year 3,000 state employees from Staten Island contributed \$40,000. This year's

goal is to better that figure by \$10,000, he said.

Citywide, the group hopes to raise \$740,000. Statewide, \$4.8 million is the goal.

SEFA allows state employees to contribute through payroll deductions to any of 550 non-profit agencies. Employees can choose the particular charity they want their money to benefit.

"This gives state workers the opportunity to give back to their community," Cicero said.

A SEFA pamphlet indicates that \$2.50 deducted each pay period provides home visits by a registered nurse to six disabled senior citizens for health screening; or daily nutritious lunches for five children for a month; or enough rice seed for four village

families for one year.

Two elected officials from Staten Island praised the group's efforts yesterday. Assemblywoman Elizabeth Connelly complimented SEFA for allowing Islanders to direct their contributions to their home town. "Staten Islanders like to take care of their own," she said, "and this program allows that."

Assemblyman Robert Straniere called the organization "the strongest, most efficient local program in the state."

On Staten Island, SEFA contributes to such organizations as Bayley Seton Hospital, Staten Island Community Services, Staten Island Family Services, Staten Island Mental Health Society, Staten Island Aid and St. Vincent's Medical Center. In addition, aid is offered to Staten Island Jewish Community Center, Meals-on-Wheels, Richmond Memorial Hospital, Society for Seamen's Children, and the Visiting Nurse Association of Staten Island.