

Your opinion

Workers, too, abhorred tragedy

The following was sent to Mr. William Schorkoph, president of the Westerleigh Improvement Society:

The February issue of the "Voice of Westerleigh" discussed the establishment of a group home at 55 Galloway Avenue and the public hearing on this matter.

As a past member of Community Board 1 and a member of the Westerleigh Improvement Society... I feel compelled to correct some of the misleading statements printed under the same title: "Establishing a Group Home."

Blaming the tragic problems that existed at the Willowbrook State School upon "staff apathy" and "self-serving unions", does a disservice to many dedicated Staten Island residents who have worked and continue to work with the developmentally disabled in our community. The problems of Willowbrook were solely a failure on the part of New York State government officials and management to provide staffing, programs or adequate supervision.

It was the state's determination to underfund care for the retarded and "warehouse" them from public view. ... In fact, as a concerned public citizen, CSEA expended tremendous efforts to help develop the Morgado Agreement

which at long last implemented court-ordered staff to client ratios and mandated quality of care standards for state-run residences statewide.

No one wanted to see conditions improved for the developmentally disabled more than the union members in whose care they were placed. As New York's oldest and largest public employee union, CSEA is proud of the leadership role it played in improving the welfare of thousands of underserved clients. ...

GEORGE BONCORAGLIO
Manhattan

[The writer is Metropolitan Region II president of CSEA.]