

1,200 enjoy special

STATEN ISLAND SUNDAY ADVANCE ■ SUNDAY, JULY 7, 1991

tour of New York Harbor

Anchor Club sponsors event

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Although the sky was all a haze yesterday, the day couldn't have been brighter for more than 1,200 special people who boarded the Andrew J. Barberi ferry boat in St. George.

The Marine and Aviation Anchor Club, part of the city Department of Transportation, Ferry Division, hosted its 18th annual Exceptional Children's Boat Ride, taking physically and mentally handicapped children and adults from all over the tri-state area for an afternoon ride through New York Harbor up to the George Washington Bridge.

The exceptional group — including residents from the Staten Island Developmental Center in Willowbrook, the Island's Special Athletes Organization, Staten Island and Brooklyn United Cerebral Palsy and Muscular Dystrophy Associations, Manhattan and Bronx developmental centers and other facilities and institutions in Queens, Connecticut and New Jersey — danced the afternoon away while viewing the Statue of Liberty and lower Manhattan.

According to Thomas Monahan, chairman and coordinator of the event, more than 300 volunteers from a variety of organizations assisted in serving lunch, donated by the 7-Eleven in Meiers Corners and the Canada Dry Corporation.

The organizations involved included the Anchor Club, the Staten Island Developmental Disability Services Offices, the West Brighton Golden Kiwanis chapter, the Shore Intermediate Maintenance Activity of Stapleton, the Meiers Corners chapter of the Vietnam Veterans of America, the Brooklyn Alhambra ABD-ER-Rahman Club and other area nonprofit organizations.

"This is the biggest event each year for some of these handicapped children and we like to make sure everyone has a great time," Monahan said. "Even the severely handicapped are allowed to attend because they are in an enclosed area, so it just makes the day extra special all around."

And special it was. The day began when the Fire Department's marine boat shot sprays of water across the Upper Bay in a salute to the group. It so inspired 30-year-Delia Minutillo of East Meadow, L.I., whose brother is an engineer with the ferry division, that she burst into her own rendition of "God Bless America."

Larry Ruzkya, 41, part of the Drop-In program at the Staten Island Developmental Center, was equally as excited. "I love the boat ride," he exclaimed, showing off the sailboats on his t-shirt. "I get to see all the sailboats, the New York Harbor and the Hudson River. I hope to come again next year."

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