

Soccer group, Little League get new fields

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The Silver Lake Soccer Club has been extra busy these days. Not only is the 200-member elite travel program participating in its fall soccer season, it has been readying its own new field.

The facility, behind the New Springville Little League complex on Forest Hill Road, will actually be on state land. It's believed this is the first time a Staten Island soccer league will have its own field.

The club, which received permission to use the land before the summer, has been

grading the property with a spring opening as its target.

"We had received a request from the Silver Lake Soccer Club for some land and we were happy we were able to provide them with a suitable area," said Robert Witkowsky, the director of the Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Services Office that is part of the state of New York's Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities.

"Because of the size of the plot, it appears we will also be able to include an extra baseball field for the New Springville

Little League in the package," added Witkowsky, who admittedly has a special place in his heart for youth sports.

"The site was perfect because there really were no trees that had to be cut down," he said. "All it needed was to be graded and seeded."

"Our office felt the area should be utilized and it was brought to our attention that these groups had a real need for it. However, the stipulation does exist that it is still our land and we could take it back if the state had another need for it."

This is not the first time Witkowsky's

office has come to the rescue. "Recently, we installed a small baseball field on a vacant lot near where they are building the new College of Staten Island in Willowbrook," said Witkowsky. "We used money raised for us from the Lowney Golf Tournament to put in the field and it is basically utilized by the Special Olympic program."

In the case of the Silver Lake Soccer Club and the New Springville Little League, the burden of creating and maintaining the respective fields will fall on

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