

Group home opens in Great Kills

Organizers seek community's trust

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A new group home for 10 developmentally disabled adults in Great Kills opened its doors yesterday, offering tours of the renovated house, a buffet featuring roast ham and turkey, and a benediction.

The home at 40 Nash Ct., along with group homes proposed for Annadale and Tottenville, had been opposed by Community Board 3 and was the subject of community protest at a public hearing last year.

Some Islanders complained that the mentally retarded residents would "destroy" the borough. But organizers of yesterday's "open house" hoped to reverse that perception.

"We know a lot of neighbors weren't fully accepting, but maybe that will change," said Bonnie Krause, a staff social worker. "The protests were mostly out of fear. When they get to know some of the girls, maybe it will ease the fears."

The home is one of 33 similar facilities run by the state through the Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Services Office. Nine

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From the left, staff members Michelle November, Felecia Gordon and Mercedes Cortez and social worker Bonnie Krause talk in the new group home at 40 Nash Ct.