

tional and job skill training needed to achieve competitive employment within the community.

"An individual job coach remains on the job with the trainee until all duties are learned and performance is stabilized," Mrs. Auerbach explained.

Weekly vocational counseling, advocacy and referrals, in addition to a bi-weekly employment support group are also available for the program's 33 members.

Both the New Dorp and Great Kills Day Treatment Centers act as liaisons for their clientele and the TeleRide transportation service, which provides transportation for clients to places of employment, medical appointments and recreational events.

TeleRide operates seven days a week depending on participants' needs, providing more than 4,500 round trips each month to the 458 people using its service, according to Mrs. Auerbach.

The agency's community center is Ocean Breeze provides an evening and Saturday morning recreation program, featuring modular activities that include sports, exercise, dance, crafts, fine arts and adult education.

The goal of the program is to develop and enhance the socialization and leisure skills of developmentally disabled individuals over the age of 18.

According to Roff, in response

requests from clients, the community center instituted several new programs this year, including a sign language course. In addition, bowlers will have the opportunity to participate in a summer league.

A community-based ceramics program is also available and some of its members are involved with activities in various Island housing centers.

Not all programs are center-oriented, however.

A Very Special Place provides a homelike environment for 24 individuals with developmental disabilities in two handsomely-appointed residences, where they can develop and improve skills in independent living, recreation and community involvement.

Benton Residence, in Dongan Hills, provides services to 10 adults with developmental disabilities, while Hylan Residence, in Grasmere, provides services for 12 older adults and senior citizens with developmental disabilities.

Residential and clinical staff provide training while medical, psychological and case management services are also in place.

In addition, supported community residences currently enable seven adults with developmental disabilities to live independently in a semi-supervised setting.

Evening and weekend habilitative services are directed at developing independent living skills in health and safety, nutri-

tion, money management and household care while assisting in accessing recreation and community resources, like the Community Center.

The 20-year road to A Very Special Place services has been paved, according to Ms. Buglioli, by a "mixed bag" of resources, including direct state/city contracts, Medicaid, foundation grants and private donors.

"During the past 20 years, the agency has certainly grown in the number of individuals that we serve and the number of individuals that we employ, but even more important, our agency has grown in the number of Staten Islanders who are our agency's friends, neighbors and advocates," remarked Ms. Benoit, executive director.

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Tickets for next Wednesday's luncheon are \$45 per person. Reservations and additional information may be obtained by calling 987-1234.

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