

CRDD breaks ground for new headquarters

■ Event marks first step toward school

By EILEEN AJ CONNELLY
ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

Golden shovels marked a golden moment yesterday as staff and supporters of Community Re-Disabled (CRDD) broke ground for the construction of their new headquarters.

About 60 people huddled against the frigid weather to celebrate the first steps toward construction of a new 44,000-square-foot school and central office space at 3450 Victory Boulevard, Travis.

CRDD, formerly known as Staten Island Aid, announced last month the purchase of the land

that will be their new home in about 18 months.

Executive Director Harry Friedland called the event "something that began as a vision that is finally becoming a reality."

"We're going to have a building that will make everyone extremely proud of our accomplishments," he said.

Marlene Markoe-Boyd, president of the CRDD board of directors, said the work the agency does makes a lifelong difference for the people they serve.

"It's the resources, and the commitment and the opportunity that's given to you," she said. "And that's what this building represents."

Martha Dumbrowski, the mother of Ned, a resident at CRDD Conti/Fandrei Residence in Great Kills, spoke of her son's accomplishments in the years he

has been associated with CRDD.

"As a parent it was agony to have to decide where to send my son for the rest of his life," she said. "All my worries and fears were unfounded."

"We are indeed grateful that Ned has been included in the family of CRDD."

Assemblywoman Elizabeth Connelly (D-North Shore), who has been an advocate for services for people with disabilities for years, was also on hand for the celebration. She said early in her Assembly career, she worked with the agency.

"To realize over the years how this organization has grown and the kind of services they've provided, and then to come here today for this groundbreaking is heartening," Mrs. Connelly said. "To all of you, thank you for your vision."

Everyone in the crowd seemed choked up during the last speech, given by Phyllis Guardascione, who works at the Mary Campbell Ellis Vocational Training Center, which is now in Tompkinsville and will move to the Travis building.

"CRDD is like a family to me, a second family," Miss Guardascione said. "And I love everybody very much."

The new building, and another new structure at 3651 Richmond

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