A groundbreaking ceremony took place at College of Staten Island which is the former location of the Willowbrook State School which closed its doors in 1987. Diane Buglioli, Deputy Executive Director, was one of the speakers at the groundbreaking ceremony. Diane, who was a former Willowbrook employee, spoke about her first day of work in 1969 and her concerns on what might lay behind all the locked doors. She was given a heavy steel key that she keeps to this day which was used to unlock the heavy, steel doors at the institution. She spoke about having seen such injustice behind those doors and that one must ensure that it is never repeated.

Also at the groundbreaking ceremony was TV journalist Geraldo Rivera and Assemblyman Michael Cusick who also spoke about the former Willowbrook State School.

The Willowbrook Mile is a collaboration among the Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Council Planning Committee. Committee members include Diane M. Buglioli, Lorraine De Santis, William J. Fritz, CSI President and in the center bottom Bernard, a former resident of Willowbrook State School.

The vision of the property is to create a pathway for everyone to share the history of the property. The Willowbrook Mile creates an educational and fitness walking trail that connects the three neighboring properties. There are ten reflection stations at different sites along the pathway. Each station includes information about the Willowbrook site, with interactive kiosks. At each station, visitors will be able to experience the history of the Willowbrook State School. The grounds are home to CSI, the Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Council and the Elizabeth Connelly Resource Center, all of which united to create the Willowbrook Mile.

Our Thanks to the Staten Island's South Shore Grandmother’s Club

The Staten Island South Shore Grandmother’s Club #1028 held its annual fundraiser at the Excelsior Grand. The club is a nonprofit organization and its mission is to help local charities in the borough who help sick and handicapped children.

Laura Delin, Director of Community & Public Relations at A Very Special Place, Inc. presented the Staten Island’s South Shore Grandmother’s Club with a thank you plaque in recognition of their continued support to AVSP, for our programs that work with children, over the past few years. We are honored for your partnership with the agency and supporting our mission to empower people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
Holiday Happenings

The After School Program had their annual Holiday Extravaganza on December 16th. They had such a fun time singing many holiday songs for their families, friends and AVSP staff. They did a fantastic job!

Visit with SI Lions Club

Thank you to the Staten Island Lions Club for their generous donation to the residents of the Supportive Apartments on December 15th. It was a fun night of eating and singing. All who attended had a wonderful time.

Community Center Holiday Party

On December 19th the Community Center program celebrated the holidays with their annual holiday party at Li Greci’s Staaten on Forest Avenue. A great time was had by all. After enjoying a delicious meal they had a wonderful time dancing it up on the dance floor.
On December 9th, the Staten Island Developmental Disabilities Council (SIDDC) held their annual Celebrating Achievements award ceremony. Congratulations to Sonny who received an award for his hard work and determination on obtaining a job at Canlon’s restaurant.

A very special thank you to all our gracious supporters of AVSP during the holiday season. The Staten Island Lions Club celebrated with the individuals of the Supported Apartments this year. Time was spent with the residents and staff and presents were distributed. An assortment of toys and stuffed animals were also received from The Staten Island Biker’s Association, U.S. Marines Toys for Tots, Office of Judge Robert J. Gigante, John & Jackie Ruggiero and Alan Magnotti. Tickets to two different holiday shows were received from the St. George Theater and The Staten Island Ballet. Your kind donations to the individuals in our programs are so well received and so much appreciated.

Our thanks to the South Beach Civic Association who presented AVSP with a donation during their 17th Annual Holiday Party in December. Thank you for all that you do for the community on Staten Island.

Employer Gift Matching

Many companies offer matching gift programs to encourage their employees to contribute to charitable organizations. Most of these programs will match contributions dollar for dollar, and some will even double or triple the amount of your gift.

Here’s how to find out if your company is one of them:

1. Go to www.matchinggifts.com/rit/
2. Type in your company in the search box
3. Once you locate your company, click on the link to the Matching Gift Form URL
4. Fill out the appropriate form (paper or online)

It’s that easy! So go online today and see if your company is listed. You can also check with your Human Resources office and see if they participate and simply obtain an application from them and return it with your donation.

Shop AmazonSmile and Amazon will make a donation to: A Very Special Place, Inc.

Shopping through AmazonSmile is very easy. You use the same Amazon.com login, and shop for the same products with the same prices and services. The only difference is the page you start your shopping on, so be sure to bookmark http://smile.amazon.com/rit/33-303096.
Let Us Do The Cooking For You!

Pre-Order Your Dinner for the Big Day March 17th

Soup, Corned Beef & Cabbage with Sides, Dessert & Irish Soda Bread

$20.99

Must place order by Noon on 3/17

Orders of 10 or more place by Noon on 3/16

Join us for Specials

Three Course Pre-fix Available Corned Beef & Cabbage, Sandwiches, Platters, Soup, Entrée and Dessert

$20.99 per person

Two Seatings Available

5:30pm & 7:30pm

*Drink Specials*

Now Offering New Cocktail Menu!

Come in and try one of Harvest Café’s 7 New Cocktails.

Buttermilk Chicken Special

Come in every Friday and Saturday Night in April for a Three Course Dinner Includes Salad, Entrée, Dessert, Coffee and a Complimentary Glass of Wine!

Land & Sea Specials

Come in every Friday and Saturday Night in March for a Three Course Dinner (3/17/17 not included) Includes Salad, Entrée, Dessert, Coffee and a Complimentary Glass of Wine!

Visit Harvest Café website! - Check us out on the web at www.harvestcafe-si.org
Harvest Café held their annual Brunch with Santa on December 10th, 11th and 17th. Mr. and Mrs. Claus stopped by and all the children took photos and received a gift while telling Santa what they would like for Christmas.

Magician Mike Lane was also there and put on a great show for the children. They were so excited watching him perform his magic tricks. It was another great brunch at the Café.

A special thank you to Frank Wilkinson of Rab’s Country Lanes for the donation of AVSP bowling shirts and tote bags. The Community Center bowlers loved their new bowling attire and are so proud to wear them while they play.