

# Speakers, awards mark tribute day for Island SERVE project members

By DIANA MARA HENRY

More than 600 Staten Island volunteers, their elected officials, and state and federal government representatives gathered yesterday in the Columbian Lyceum, West Brighton to celebrate the fourth annual SERVE tribute day.

The speakers, including the guest of honor, John D. Twiname of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Borough President Conner, Congressman John M. Murphy and State Sen. John J. Marchi, saluted the volunteer project for the elderly, which began on Staten Island five years ago and is now a model for the nation.

"Your country needs you," said Twiname, in his keynote address. Though such tremendous emphasis today is placed on youth, he said, "those who have built this country have so much more to give... their skill, experience, wisdom, and understanding."

The Willowbrook State School Band provided a musical prelude, and an interlude of song, during the event. Master of ceremonies was Caspar W. Rittenberg, chairman of the Community Service Society's public affairs department, committee on aging.

First speaker on the program was the borough president, who lauded the volunteers for "involvement in the community for the betterment of their fellow man... Please keep helping to make Staten Island a better place to live," he said.

Outlining the progress of SERVE (Serve and Enrich Retirement) by Volunteer Experience), Arthur Garson, chairman of the Community Service Society's committee on aging, pointed out that the SERVE concept has spread to 10 different programs throughout New York State.

The project, which started on the Island with 23 volunteers in 1967, has grown to an organization of 553 volunteers, aged 60 to 93, giving regular service in 24 Island agencies and organizations for social welfare. It is the largest volunteer program by older persons in the country.

Representing HEW's Social Rehabilitation Service's Administration on Aging, of which he is director of research and development grants, Dr. Marvin J. Taves commended the group's work and the invaluable research material they have provided for similar groups throughout the country. "The eyes of the nation are upon each of you," he said.

A message from Gov. Rockefeller outlining a bill signed on April 30, by which local governments are authorized to reimburse traveling and personal expenses of the volunteers, was read by Miss Evelyn Cunningham, director of the governor's women's unit.

As a tribute from the Junior Guild of Staten Island, Mrs. Joseph Devine Jr., the guild's program chairman, made a



John D. Twiname of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare chats with, left to right, Mrs. Mary Ochs, Mrs. Paul Carannante, Mrs. Ruth Riley and Mrs. Jean Hurley, all SERVE volunteers, after his speech in the Columbian Lyceum, West Brighton.

S.I. Advance Photo by Tony Carandino

donation to SERVE, and offered the guild's volunteer services for the coming year. Hostesses from the guild also served at the meeting.

Congressman Murphy presented a tribute to the volunteers from the Staten Island Community. "I wish that my colleagues in Congress, the Supreme Court, and other branches of the government had the vim and vigor of the SERVE volunteers here today," said Murphy. "We'd have a much better country."

Four volunteers with 1,000 hours of service or more were presented with medals by Mrs. Douglas Auchinchloss, president of the Van Ameringen Foundation, which supports SERVE. The volunteers were Mrs. Alice Bridgewater, Mrs. Marion Burke, James J. Gallagher and Miss Mary McMurray.

Two volunteers with 1,600 hours or more with SERVE were honored by H. Anthony Littleton, trustee of the Littleton Family Foundation, the first to support SERVE. They were Mrs. Marion Bennett and Henry Hansen.

Scheduled proceedings were briefly interrupted by a warm tribute to Mrs. Janet Sainer, SERVE project director, when James Gallagher, the volunteer, presented her with a volume containing pictures of the group at work and a message signed by all the

volunteers.

In tribute to the volunteers, Senator Marchi told them they have proved that "when we speak of problems and challenges, we actually mean opportunities... the spirit which moves you is contagious," he said, "giving a sense of understanding and purpose to all society."

The special contribution to volunteer work which older people can make was outlined in a tribute by Mrs. Marcelle G. Levy, director of New York State's Office for the Aging, Bernard C. Fisher, director of Community Service Society's department of public affairs, then honored Arthur Garson with a tribute of "gratitude and appreciation," as one of the people who developed the concept of SERVE.

At the meeting's close, Mrs. Sainer led the group in expressing its gratitude to Jack Hammond, director of Willowbrook, and Miss Elizabeth Hammond, the school's director of volunteer service. Over half of SERVE's volunteer work at Willowbrook, which she noted, was the first institution to open its doors to their services.

Members of the SERVE staff who were also honored were its two community relations workers, Mrs. Anne K. Reisch and Mrs. Polly Norrmann, who were presented with a book of poems and kind

thoughts addressed to them by over 200 of the volunteers.

Also from the staff, Miss Mary Zander, research specialist, John Steen, research interviewer, Mrs. Connie Yaremko, Angela McCauley, records and research secretary, received a vote of thanks.

Among the younger volunteers who helped the staff during the past year for the first time were Mrs. Jeffrey Bash, Mrs. Theodora Clark and Mrs. Matthew D. Dorrest, who were thanked at the close of the event.