

Nixon aide joins in annual tribute to Island's SERVE volunteers

"You are the gears that make the wheels run," Mrs. Patricia Reilly Hitt, assistant secretary for community and field services for the Health Education and Welfare Department told 615 senior citizens at the fifth annual SERVE Volunteer Tribute Day yesterday in the Columbian Lyceum, West Brighton.

The first woman appointee by President Nixon said that it was good luck she came in toward the end of the Willowbrook State School band's sprightly selections "or else I'd be dragging some of you men up to dance, because I love to dance!"

The silver-haired crowd applauded Mrs. Hitt's announcement that she became a grandmother three weeks ago.

She flew in from Washing-

ton yesterday morning to see SERVE (Serve and Enrich Retirement by Volunteer Experience) at work at Willowbrook and give the keynote speech on the future of volunteerism.

"SERVE is no longer just here on Staten Island, she said," noting that it has led to the formation of similar programs throughout the state and influenced federal legislation for a Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), which also will start nationwide programs.

She paid tribute to the work of volunteers who have given 140,000 hours of service in 24 Island agencies, to Mrs. Janet Sainer, SERVE director, and to the parent organization, the Community Service Society, and its staff.

Mrs. Hitt reported that the RSVP program would soon be transferred from HEW to ACTION, the president's proposed umbrella agency for volunteer groups.

Mrs. Hitt said there will be 80 projects based on SERVE. They'll involve more than 25,000 volunteers by July 1972.

Presiding over Tribute Day was Caspar W. Rittenberg, chairman of the SERVE's Committee on aging. The list of guests included James J. O'Malley, deputy director of the state Office for the Aging; Miss Ann Poling, assistant general director of the Community Service Society, and Arthur Garson, a member of the White House Conference on Aging.

Mrs. Marion Bennett accepted a golden pin from Elmer W. Smith, Regional commissioner

of HEW's social and rehabilitation service for 2,000 hours of volunteer service. She summed up the feelings of volunteers by declaring, "It has meant so much to each and every one of us to be participating members of the community. We have been enriched as we have served."

Other volunteers cited for outstanding service records were James Gallagher, 1,500 hours; Mrs. Marion Burke, 1,400 hours; Mrs. Hannah Sandbeck, 1,300 hours; Miss Mary McMurray, Enoch Nilser, and Alexander Perez, 1,200 hours; Miss Ethel Brown and Mrs. Ethel Pollack, 1,100 hours; and Mrs. Genevieve Adamo, Mrs. Linda Cairo, Harry F. Dittmar, Mrs. Edith Hansen, and Mrs. Juanita Perez, 1,000 hours.