

# Island volunteers win national recognition

By LAWRENCE DeMARIA

SERVE, the Staten Island volunteer group of elderly citizens that helps people of all ages and has inspired similar efforts throughout the state, has been named America's outstanding volunteer organization for 1971.

SERVE will receive a National Volunteer Award sponsored by the National Center for Voluntary Action. The award will be presented tonight at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.

The individual award will go to Mrs. Arnette Giles of Pearlinton, Miss., for her 50 years of work in raising 40 adopted retarded children. Six award finalists will also be honored.

SERVE originated on Staten Island in 1966 with 23 volunteers recruited by the Community Service Society of New York. Today more than 600 members, from 60 to 96, assist the ill, the mentally retarded, the aged and homebound and children with learning obstacles in 30 institutions on Staten Island. It has become a citywide service organization and is the model for similar groups in New York State and the federal government's recently launched Retired Senior Volunteer Program.

Accepting the award for all SERVE volunteers, tonight in Washington will be Joseph Reina, a widower who serves twice a week at Willowbrook State School, and James Gallagher. Both men are from West Brighton.

Willowbrook is the setting for the largest number of SERVE volunteers — about 200. The volunteers assist staff workers by helping to feed and care for retarded children, teaching folk dancing to retarded adolescents, assisting in occupational therapy, repairing strollers, chairs and other furniture, sorting donated clothing, and other tasks. Where possible, one-to-one relationships between volunteer and patient is encouraged.

## MANY FUNCTIONS

Other SERVE volunteers on Staten Island assist teachers and tutor children in reading, repair donated books for distribution to needy children, serve as friendly visitors to the ill and the institutionalized aged, make regular telephone calls to the homebound, and are office volunteers for the American Cancer Society and the Red Cross.

SERVE (Serve and Enrich Retirement by Volunteer Experience), which now has 42 pilot programs and 750 volunteers outside Staten Island in New York State, will be represented at the awards banquet tonight, in addition to Reina and Gallagher, by Mrs. Marion Bennett of Stapleton, who is the top SERVE volunteer in the program with 2,500 hours of service; Miss Rita E. McDonough of Tottenville, a SERVE volunteer and public relations officer for the Tottenville Unity Group; Mrs. Polly Normann, SERVE coordinator on the Island; Mrs. Anne Reisch, a former SERVE coordinator; Dr. and Mrs. James G. Emerson Jr., general director of the Community Services Society; Mrs. Janet S. Sainer, director of SERVE; Robert W. Sweet, president of the society; Arthur Garson, chairman of the committee on

aging; Caspar W. Rittenberg, chairman of the SERVE committee; Mrs. Jean Wallace Carey, staff associate for the aging, and Miss Mary L. Zander, research associate, all of the Community Service Society.

Congressman and Mrs. John Murphy and Mrs. Marion Anderson, assistant to Borough President Connor, will attend tonight's banquet as guests of SERVE.

The SERVE organization will receive a plaque and a \$5,000 cash prize for winning the National Volunteer Award.

SERVE and Mrs. Giles were chosen from nominations from 31 states and Puerto Rico. Screening of the many nominees was done by a faculty panel from C.W. Post College of Long Island University.

Final selection of winners was made by a panel of five judges: Mayor Charles Evers of Fayette, Miss.; Walter Hickel, former secretary of the Interior Department and former governor of Alaska; H.I. Romnes, chairman of the board of the American Telephone and Telegraph Co.; Alvin Toffler, author of "Future Shock," and Mrs. Jacqueline G. Wexler, president of Hunter College.

The other finalists this year are Mr. and Mrs. Walter Decker of Youngstown, Ohio, for aid to the needy elderly; John T. Hairston of Christiansburg, Va., for organizing "unemployables" to build low-cost housing for the poor; Mrs. Jean Jacobs of San Francisco, for her work with neglected and delinquent children; Athens Mental Health Center (student) Volunteer Program, Athens, Ohio; University of Rhode Island students, for prison assistance and reform, and the Mexican-American Service Agency of Pueblo, Colo., for grassroots work for economic reforms for Mexican Americans.

It's good news!

## Clothes for retarded

Penny Annunziato of New Brighton, writes: "I always heard that when a call for help is sent out, there will always be someone to hear it. Well, it's true."

Penny goes on to say in January she started collecting clothes for the children of Willowbrook State School. "You'd never believe the response I got," she explains.

She would like to thank Mrs. L. Ortiz, Mrs. L. Duran, Mrs. C. Caplan and Mrs. E. Scherb who live in her building at 151 Jersey St. for their help and Mrs. E. Truppner of 81 Jersey St. plus others at 131.

What's your good news? Send it to:  
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