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**#48-17**

**NEW YORK CITY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PRESENTS THE READY NEW YORK SENIOR CENTER OF THE YEAR AWARD TO PETER CARDELLA SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER IN RIDGEWOOD**

*More than 3,600 older New Yorkers across the five boroughs participated in Ready New York emergency preparedness training this year*

**November 16, 2017** – The New York City Emergency Management Department (NYCEM) and the Department for the Aging (DFTA) today presented the fifth annual Ready New York Senior Center of the Year Award to Barbara Toscano, executive director for The Peter Cardella Senior Citizen Center, for her ongoing commitment to preparing seniors for emergencies. In addition to the nearly 200 seniors serviced at the facility daily, the center also distributed more than 425 meals to homebound seniors. The center’s Meals on Wheels program was recognized for their outstanding work in providing meals during Hurricane Sandy and other weather-related emergencies.

“Ms. Toscano and the team at the Peter Cardella Senior Center have done an exceptional job of engaging the community in helping to prepare older New Yorkers for emergencies. Their work at the senior center should also be commended,” said **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito**. “We are also thankful to the Department for the Aging for their partnership in helping to educate New York’s seniors about the importance of emergency preparedness.”

“As we’ve learned in far too many crisis situations, there is great value in proactively preparing seniors for emergencies. We’re very proud of the team at Peter Cardella and the center’s efforts to promote the goals of Ready New York,” said **Department for the Aging Commissioner Donna Corrado**. “DFTA is committed to partnering with NYC Emergency Management to ensure that all New Yorkers have emergency plans and Go Bags.”

“We are so honored to be the recipient of the 2017 Senior Center of the Year award from NYC Emergency Management. It means so much to us to be recognized and we thank you for your good work in preparing all New Yorkers for emergencies,” said **Executive Director Barbara Toscano**. “The entire team at the Peter Cardella Center is dedicated to being ready, willing, and able to deliver services to senior citizens and pledge to be steadfast in our commitment to empower seniors in emergency preparedness by working together with your organization and the community at large.”

As part of the emergency preparedness program, members received regular preparedness presentations and are reminded to pack a Go Bag with basic supplies, medical information and contact names and numbers. Ms. Toscano has shown dedication to emergency preparedness through her extensive work in the community. The center has a great working relationship with the 104<sup>th</sup> Precinct and regularly partners to conduct safety drills and presentations for its clients.

The senior center has also partnered with local elementary school P.S. 88Q on numerous community events. The success of the center's Meal on Wheels program is another example of their commitment to providing services to the community. During heat emergencies, the senior center serves as one of the city's more than 500 cooling centers activated to help New Yorkers beat the heat.

"I commend Barbara Toscano and all at the Peter Cardella Senior Citizen Center for their unwavering commitment to local seniors, and all they do to help older Americans prepare for emergencies," said **U.S. Rep. Grace Meng**. "Their tireless work makes them worthy recipients for this award, and I am proud to offer my heartfelt congratulations. Thanks to New York City Emergency Management and the Department for the Aging for recognizing the efforts of the Peter Cardella Senior Citizen Center – a facility that I have been proud to visit – and thank you to Barbara and the entire senior center staff for their continued service to seniors in our community."

"Few senior centers in my district have thrived as much as the Peter Cardella Senior Citizen Center. I was blessed to know Mr. Cardella and always admired his vision to help others by providing the services they need," said **NYS Senator Joseph Addabbo**. "Today, the center continues to advance Mr. Cardella's intent through the senior center and meal delivery to seniors. I look forward to working with the Cardella Center in finding the resources necessary to improve the quality of life for our seniors."

"Peter Cardella Senior Citizen Center is a very special place in our Ridgewood community in large part because of the hard work and leadership of director Barbara Toscano," said **Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan**. "We are all very proud of this wonderful honor for such a deserving person."

In 2017, NYC Emergency Management's Ready New York program hosted over 50 presentations in NYC senior centers and trained more than 3,600 older New Yorkers in preparedness. So far, more than 129,000 My Emergency Plan workbooks have been distributed to older New Yorkers. My Emergency Plan is designed to help New Yorkers create an emergency plan. The workbook guides users through establishing a support network, capturing important health information, evacuation planning, and gathering emergency supplies. First responders or caregivers can also use the workbook to help people during an emergency. My Emergency Plan is available in several different languages including English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Arabic, Bengali, Haitian Creole, Italian, Korean, Polish, Urdu, and Yiddish.

"The Peter Cardella Senior Center does an outstanding job working with our borough's seniors and has done a great deal to help prepare them for emergencies," said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**. "The Center has also gone above and beyond by continuing to provide its seniors with meals during Hurricane Sandy and other recent emergency situations. The Peter Cardella Senior Center is a most worthy recipient of the Ready New York Senior Center of the Year Award and New York City Emergency Management should be commended for bestowing this award in recognition of the Center's great work."

“The Peter Cardella Senior Center is more than just a senior center, and Barbara Toscano more than its executive director. So many seniors in our community depend on their services every single day. I know that through their work and services, our seniors will always be well-informed, ready, and set to go in any situation. I’m proud of our strong partnership and thank them for their continued dedication to the people of Ridgewood and beyond,” **said NYC City Council Member Elizabeth Crowley.**

“Congratulations to Barbara Toscano, the staff members and directors at the Peter Cardella Senior Center for all they have done to give enjoyment, help and preparedness to so many of the elderly,” **said District Manager of Queens Community Board 5 Gary Giordano.** “For many years, this senior center has been an example of all the good that can be done by an excellent non-profit organization.”

### **About the Ready New York Program**

The *Ready New York* program outlines three important strategies to preparing for emergencies:

- **Get Ready: *Make a Plan*** – Have at least two phone numbers – one local and one out-of- state number – which you can call in an emergency and practice the plan with adults in your home.
- **Get Set: *Prepare a Stay at Home Kit*** – During emergencies that require you to stay at home, it is important to have extra food and water for everyone in the house and a battery-operated radio for news updates.
- **Get Ready to Go: *Pack a Go Bag*** – During emergencies that require you to leave your home, have a Go Bag with emergency supplies.

This year’s award ceremony was held at the Peter Cardella Senior Center in Ridgewood, Queens. Members of the local Queens Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) distributed emergency preparedness materials and coordinated preparedness games. New York City Emergency Management First Deputy Commissioner Calvin Drayton was joined by Linda Whitaker, Assistant Commissioner for the Department for the Aging, to present this year’s award.

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