
For Immediate Release
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**NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PRESENTS THE READY NEW YORK OLDER
ADULT CENTER OF THE YEAR AWARD TO ALPHA PHI ALPHA SENIOR
CITIZENS CENTER IN QUEENS**

The center conducted innovative virtual classes, hosted the Mammogram Bus during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and exhibited exemplary knowledge in emergency preparedness

December 8, 2021 — New York City Emergency Management and the New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA) presented Alpha Phi Alpha Senior Citizens Center with the Ready New York Older Adult Center of the Year Award during an in-person ceremony on Wednesday, December 8. The ninth annual award recognizes an older adult center in the five boroughs that has made an ongoing commitment to preparing older adults for emergencies. The award ceremony included a poetry reading, line dancing, and remarks from elected officials. The center also held a Go Bag competition — judged by New York City Emergency Management Acting Commissioner Andrew D’Amora and New York City Department for the Aging Commissioner Lorraine A. Cortés-Vázquez — to demonstrate the older adults’ knowledge in emergency preparedness.

As the COVID-19 pandemic roared on into 2021, the doors of many older adult centers were closed, limiting New Yorkers’ ability to access vital information, physical activities, and social services. Although they were “physically closed,” older adult centers like the Alpha Phi Alpha Senior Citizens Center in Queens pivoted to a system of remote and virtual services that helped provide critical services to neighborhood residents and helped community members stay active and engaged.

The Alpha Phi Alpha Senior Citizens Center, located in Cambria Heights, was actively recruiting new members and conducting virtual classes like “Jokercise,” a joke and exercise class featuring comedian Aldo Marachlian of *Comedy Central*. The Alpha Phi Alpha Senior Citizens Center also continued to provide their neighbors with emergency preparedness information. Some of their outstanding programs and activities included ongoing emergency preparedness classes, crime prevention classes from their local police precinct, and regular visits from the local firehouse and scheduled fire drills. Photos from the event are available [here](#).

“Since the COVID-19 pandemic, New Yorkers have demonstrated remarkable resiliency through their commitment to service. Older adult centers are pivotal in providing an array of programs and services to their communities. We are thrilled to honor the Alpha Phi Alpha Senior Citizens Center,” said **NYC Emergency Management Acting Commissioner Andrew D’Amora**. “We were extremely impressed with the center’s innovative virtual programs and their continuous effort in conducting emergency preparedness classes. Thanks to the center’s dedication to emergency preparedness, we know older adults in this community are better prepared.”

“Alpha Phi Alpha Senior Citizens Center is an outstanding example of how older adult centers rose to the challenge during pandemic and continued offering critical services to older New Yorkers,” said **Department for the Aging Commissioner Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez**. “Older adult centers, like Alpha Phi Alpha, pivoted from their regular programming and developed creative solutions to deliver services remotely and offered virtual programming, which have continued to keep older New Yorkers socially connected and engaged. They have also been at the forefront of educating their clients about the importance of emergency preparedness.”

“I am honored and pleased that Alpha Phi Alpha Senior Center will receive the Ready New York Older Adult Center of the Year Award. This past year has not been easy and there were many challenges with keeping our seniors and members safe,” said **Alpha Phi Alpha Senior Citizens Center Director Melissa Y. Marcus**. “My staff and I worked hard to ensure that we continued providing the programs and services that were needed. We appreciate that our efforts are being recognized.”

“Our senior centers are critical lifelines for our elders seeking comprehensive services and community. Few centers are as encompassing and empowering as the Alpha Phi Alpha Senior Citizens Center in Cambria Heights — a well-deserving recipient of this incredible award,” said **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, Jr.** “Congratulations to all the center's dedicated staff, who selflessly serve our borough's beloved seniors with unmatched compassion and grace.”

About the Alpha Phi Alpha Senior Citizens Center

The Alpha Phi Alpha Senior Citizens Center is a multipurpose facility that provides a wide range of services for older adults in the community. The center promotes physical well-being through nutrition, education, and health with their programs. The Alpha Phi Alpha Senior Citizens Center also provides nutritionally balanced meals daily. Representatives from various City, state, and private agencies often visit the center to share vital information that enhances older adults' daily living. Alpha Phi Alpha, the first African-American Greek-letter fraternity in America, founded the Alpha Phi Alpha Senior Citizens Center in 1996.

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 emergency contacts – one local and one out-of-area – who you can call in an emergency. Practice your plan with everyone 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.



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Get Ready to Go: Pack a Go Bag – During emergencies that require you to leave your home, have a Go Bag with emergency supplies.

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