

For Immediate Release
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NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT'S CITIZEN CORPS HOSTS ANNUAL DISASTER VOLUNTEER CONFERENCE

Theme focuses on working with diverse populations

June 30, 2015 – New York City Emergency Management's Citizen Corps today hosted its ninth annual Disaster Volunteer Conference, bringing together government agencies, professionals, and community members to support the City's disaster volunteer community through skilled-based workshops and training. Conference attendees included volunteers who played a crucial role in emergency responses over the past year – such as the East Village explosion and building collapse – including Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), Medical Reserve Corps, and American Red Cross volunteers, as well as community stakeholders. This year's conference, "Becoming Response Ready: Working with Diverse Populations", focused on effective disaster response by working with people with varying needs. NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito addressed the attendees and emphasized the agency's dedication to equipping volunteers with the knowledge and skills needed to remain prepared for future emergencies. Kanhong Lin, Regional Manager for Disaster Preparedness at American Red Cross – Greater New York Chapter, presented the evening's keynote speech. The conference was held Tuesday at Baruch College.

"During any emergency we need to make sure we are doing everything possible to help New Yorkers," Commissioner Esposito said. "New York City is a complex and diverse City, and this conference is about making sure our volunteers have the awareness and skills they need to serve the many different people that live in our communities."

This year's conference featured two tracks of skill-based workshops that focused on serving people with varying needs. From addressing the needs of children in disasters, to learning about psychological first aid, to working with people with disabilities, access and functional needs, subject-matter experts from NYC Emergency Management helped more than 200 volunteers, emergency responders, recovery workers, and community stakeholders explore the topic of working with diverse populations. Other workshop topics included: Engaging Faith Communities in Disaster, Increasing Religious Competency and Literacy, and Transformative Change: Diversity and Cultural Competency.

NYC Citizen Corps is part of the national Citizen Corps initiative that seeks to make communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to and recover from emergencies. Through outreach, training, and volunteer service, NYC Citizen Corps brings together leaders from volunteer programs, community and nonprofit organizations, the private sector, and

government to promote preparedness at the local level. The program also engages healthcare facilities, advocacy organizations, faith-based institutions and other community-based organizations in developing plans, conducting outreach, and educating their constituents about how to be better prepared for any emergency. Through NYC Citizen Corps, community members are connected to a variety of tools and resources to ensure they are informed and prepared.

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