



The CERT Report

June 2011

CERT Members Active for Start of Summer



Richard Toussaint, MN11 Deputy Chief, directs traffic at 135th Street and Madison Avenue in Manhattan during the Five Boro Bike Tour. Fifteen CERT teams assisted during the tour, one of five events in which CERT played a role during the first weekend in May.

CERT Helps Announce New Emergency Notification System



CERT members from lower Manhattan with Mayor Bloomberg and Commissioner Bruno. They joined FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate and FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski at a press conference overlooking Ground Zero to announce the Personal Localized Alerting Network (PLAN), a free service that will send geographically-targeted, emergency text alerts to enabled mobile devices.

CERT Assists with March Bus Crash

Early in the morning of March 12, a bus heading from a Connecticut casino to Chinatown crashed on the Hutchinson River Parkway. Ultimately 15 people died in this tragedy. OEM stood up two operations: one in the OEM Situation Room and one at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. It quickly became apparent that the language skills of CERT members would be useful and three Manhattan teams sent members to assist with interpretation: MN3, MN1-Tribeca, and MN7. In addition, MN6 members stood by to assist had the situation necessitated their help. Below is a synopsis from MN3 member Ed Diaz on his experience at the Family Support Center that was established to assist the victims' families:

I arrived at the Family Support Center located at 62 Mott Street in Manhattan on March 14 at 12:50 PM. This is the location of the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association, where MN3 holds its meetings.

Even though I don't speak Mandarin I decided just the same to assist with my Spanish and Portuguese. Shortly after arriving I was asked to assist two Spanish-speaking men who wanted information and assistance for their brother-in-law who died in the crash.

The first stop was at the NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA) desk to apply for financial assistance to fly the body of the individual back home for burial in El Salvador. We then went to the desk of the New York State Bar Association for victim assistance regarding legal matters. The Bar Association was not doling out legal advice but gave the men tips on not being a victim of attorney abuse.

These were the only people that I helped for the four hours I was there, but I know it served a huge purpose in getting the right answers to questions that could have gone unanswered due to a language barrier.

Afterward I went around and familiarized myself with the different agencies that were present, including NYPD, New York State Police, HRA, the Bar Association, and OEM and learned how they each fit into all that was going on there. Speaking to these individuals about what they do and what we do gives us

CERT Tackles Radios in Pilot Program

More than 80 members from 10 CERT teams across the city are currently participating in a radio pilot program. The program teaches CERT members the appropriate use of radios through training and real and simulated events. Lila Heilbrunn from MN8-UES CERT shared some of her thoughts and observations on the program:

Our Manhattan CERT Upper East Side team is happy to be part of the NYC radio pilot. We have been working with radios since 2008. We were fortunate to have them when we were deployed at the East 91st Street Crane Collapse. Radios provide instant communication reaching many members at the same time. We can know the location of our members and any problems that may develop.

As part of the radio pilot, we have participated in individual communication exercises and team exercises. Our radios have been programmed with new frequencies provided by Citywide Disaster Services. We are working with our neighboring CERT team, MN7, planning joint drills, and coordinating the use of the CERT tactical channels available to us with other teams working nearby.

More than 20 CERT members from MN8-UES, MN7, MN11, and MN10 worked together at the Five Boro Bike Tour on May 1, 2011. While many members had not met before, we worked as one team, successfully directing the flow of the cyclists through the area and managing the problems that arose. The radios provided us with immediate notification of the accidents that occurred and the victims were able to receive first aid promptly.

We look forward to the remaining exercises, as we will continue to check radio transmissions in our area and improve our skills in using the radios.

NYC OEM is happy to be able to offer this radio training to our pilot teams and is grateful to Community Disaster Services, Inc. for lending its trainers and their vast expertise. Pending the outcome of this radio pilot and an evaluation, OEM plans to offer a radio training course to other CERT teams later in the year.

Brooklyn Teams Staff 4/30 MS Walk



Brooklyn Borough Manager Peter Morici and Eve Morici, working at the NYC MS Walk on 4/30.

At 7 AM on Saturday, April 30, 19 CERT members from five Brooklyn teams, as well as several members of the Port Richmond Staten Island team, arrived to begin their day as volunteers at the

all a better understanding about what we all bring to the table when we meet to assist the citizens of NYC. I say, "We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers" in times of trouble.

I returned the next day to spend a few hours and help because it is really satisfying to be there for someone who is struggling with a difficult situation. Is it good to be a CERT member? You bet because people matter and hurt people matter even more...

New CERT Members Participate in Port Authority Drill

Thanks to Damon Hemmerdinger, Queens 11, for the following account of the recent Port Authority exercise.

The Port Authority Bus Terminal Full-Scale Exercise held in the wee hours of April 30 and May 1 was my first disaster simulation after CERT training. As I walked up to the Terminal and saw 8th Avenue closed to traffic I knew I was in for the kind of experience I hoped for. I made my way to volunteer check-in and was asked if I was willing to get makeup.

Of course, I answered. I was assigned to be Ivan, a 57-year-old male whose left leg was crushed under heavy debris. Within five minutes I had an amazingly realistic compound-fracture. I limped to my seat to talk to my firends from CERT training -- it's amazing how a fake wound tricks your mind into limping.

We were divided into groups and moved into our locations. I was a victim inside the building. I lay down under "heavy debris" as they turned on intense smoke machines. The lights were mostly off, with a few fire alarm strobes left on. A voice announced, "The drill has started."

And we waited. I hadn't really understood that victims may wait so long. I got bored of screaming that I was in pain --- and I was in fake pain. Imagine if I had actually been in pain. By the time they got there, I wonder how much energy I would have had left to scream out. I am sure that it was not actually a long wait, but it sure seemed like a long time.

The Port Authority police officers' flashlights shone through the smoke, and our screams picked up again. They quickly walked around the space and decided which victims to attend to first -- I was not one of the lucky ones. Check: Joe Brosi taught us to leave the hardest-to-remove victims until last and I was stuck under debris.

When they came for me, four officers lifted the debris off me, put me on a back board, and carried me out. The officers struggled a lot.

annual NYC MS Walk. Teams staffed specific posts along the route, giving out water and more importantly, moral support to the more than 10,000 walkers who participated. Volunteers used point-to-point phones to communicate and call in periodic updates to the MS Walk command post. Team members also answered many questions throughout the day.

At the end of the event, the members held a hot wash and noted successes, such as the incorporation of several first-timers into the event, as well as challenges, such as there not being sufficient water stations along the route.

Here's looking forward to another chance to serve at the walk next year!

Thanks to Peter Morici, Brooklyn Borough Manager and BK CD 12 Team Chief, for this report.

They dropped me head first once, catching me in the nick of time. After a bit, one of the officers asked his colleagues if there were any stretchers or slides available to make this easier. They found a slide, and two officers easily accomplished what four could not. Check: use equipment to make the task as easy and quick as possible to help more people.

I got to triage and was put in the street away from all of the other victims who were on the sidewalk, and the two officers ran back to see where else they were needed. I was the last victim brought to that triage area, and was surprised that my fellow victims were still waiting for EMS to arrive. We waited and waited. During that wait, detectives interviewed each victim. They were thoughtful with us, and from my perch I could hear their deliberations as they sorted out conflicting eyewitness reports.

When the triage team arrived, they were firefighters, not EMS. This pinch-hitting team had several miscues that we had discussed during our CERT training. It was refreshing to learn that we had not done so badly during our training and eye-opening as to why even the professionals have to drill repeatedly.

Once the triage was complete, we walked back to the volunteer check-in area, returned our victim tags, got a certificate and a snack, and headed out into the 3 AM darkness, ready to come back again for another full-scale exercise.

Upcoming Training

Introduction to Ready NY for CERT - This is a mandatory re-certification class. If you have not taken it you must do so in order to be considered an active CERT members. Updated ID pictures will also be taken at the same time. Please contact your team chief to arrange to receive this training.

Cross-Cultural Awareness Training will be held on Wednesday, June 29th at OEM.

Traffic Safety: Dates for traffic safety classes taught by NYPD officers will be offered later this year.

To sign up for these and other trainings, please contact: certtraining@oem.nyc.gov.

Upcoming CERT Graduation

106 new members have finished up their CERT training by completing their disaster simulations. On June 29th, they will join the ranks of full-fledged CERT volunteers. The Cycle 16 graduation ceremony will be held at Frank Sinatra High School for the Performing Arts in Astoria, Queens. The newest members will join 37 teams in all five boroughs.

Welcome to our newest members!

CERT Quiz (Parks Edition)

1. How many City parks are there in the five boroughs?
2. Which borough has the most park land?
3. Beaches also fall under the Parks Department. How many miles of beaches does New York City boast?

Answers:

1. 1,700
2. The Bronx.
3. 14

For more information about NYC OEM CERT, log on to the website at www.nyc.gov/cert or call the CERT hotline at (718) 422 - 8585.

CERT is always looking to train motivated individuals to prepare for and respond to emergencies. Anyone looking for more information may contact the CERT hotline or e-mail cert@oem.nyc.gov.

Check out national stories of CERT in action: <https://www.citizencorps.gov/cert/certinaction/index.shtm>



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