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**For Immediate Release**

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**NEW YORK CITY COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (NYC CERT)  
PROGRAM WELCOMES 33 NEW MEMBERS**

*New graduates are joining more than 1,200 volunteers to help their communities during emergencies*

*[{Click to watch the graduation}](#)*

**January 20, 2022** – The New York City Emergency Management Department welcomed 33 new Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers to its program during a virtual graduation ceremony on Tuesday, January 11. The NYC CERT basic training cycle includes 10 sessions that focus on disaster preparedness and emergency response, equipping volunteers with skills in basic fire safety, search and rescue, traffic management, and first aid and triage. New York City Emergency Management offered the training program with instructors from the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) and New York City Police Department (NYPD) Auxiliary Unit. New York City Emergency Management Acting Commissioner Christina Farrell was on-hand to deliver remarks at the ceremony. This marks the 19-year anniversary of the NYC CERT program. The full graduation ceremony is available [here](#).

“Community Emergency Response Teams are an integral part of the City’s emergency planning. Whether it’s supporting during the pandemic or hosting presentations to prepare their fellow New Yorkers for emergencies, our CERT members are always there to answer the call,” said **New York City Emergency Management Acting Commissioner Christina Farrell**. “On behalf of NYC Emergency Management, I congratulate the 33 graduates and look forward to the great work they will do in their communities.”

During the ceremony, the John D. Solomon Award for Exemplary Service in Emergency Preparedness Education was presented to Geneva Wilson of Bronx 2 CERT. Throughout the year, Wilson demonstrated a strong dedication to NYC CERT, volunteering with the Ready New York program to educate her community about emergency preparedness while also maintaining her role as a recruiter for the CERT program. Wilson was recognized for her extensive efforts to prepare the communities in the Bronx for emergencies.

“NYC Emergency Management’s Community Emergency Response Teams is an integral part of the city’s response to major emergencies and the FDNY is proud to be part of it. The impact of these volunteers cannot be overstated: this training means our communities are stronger and more prepared for whatever comes our way. We join NYC Emergency Management and the other agencies in congratulating the graduates and look forward to their tremendous work,” said **Fire Commissioner Daniel A. Nigro**.

Two of the volunteer program teams were also honored for going above and beyond the call of duty to support their communities. Queens 2 CERT was presented with the Carlos Nieves New

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York City CERT Award for Excellence in Deployment and Emergency Response. The award recognizes a community emergency response team that has exhibited exceptional dedication to assisting their fellow New Yorkers during emergencies. The team worked tirelessly supporting the City by staffing vaccine sites and FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers following Hurricane Ida, while also canvassing and distributing personal protective equipment to residents in their communities.

The Joanne Webb Dixon New York City Ambassador Award was also presented to a local Queens' team. The award recognizes the team's generous commitment of time, support, and inspiration to its community, along with exceptional focus on expanding partnerships. This year's recipient, Queens 6 CERT, worked with New York City Emergency Management's Community Preparedness team to host a series of emergency preparedness trainings for community organizations and residents.

"The NYPD and the NYPD's Auxiliary Police Section are proud to partner with the NYC CERT program. The NYPD's Auxiliary police section demonstrates the vital role that well-trained, prepared and dedicated civilian volunteers can play in assisting first responders during critical incidents," said **Police Department Commissioner Keechant L. Sewell**. "The NYC CERT program continues to be an effective way for dedicated volunteers to assist first responders and their communities in the event of a disaster."

Last year, CERT members responded to both planned and unplanned events including the Hometown Heroes Parade, 5 Boro Bike Tour, the Macy's 4th of July Fireworks celebration, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, and the City's response to the flash flood emergency caused by Hurricane Ida. Just recently, CERT members were deployed to provide support during the annual Coney Island Polar Bear Plunge. During the event, a participant was seen face down in the water and in need of aid. The CERT members there quickly jumped in to assist, with Brooklyn 6 CERT member Britta Husack providing lifesaving CPR.

Since its launch, NYC CERT has responded to a host of emergencies, and local teams quickly adapt to the City's specific emergency needs. CERT members also work year-round to ensure their communities are prepared for emergencies, providing information and resources to assist residents with creating an emergency plan for their friends and family. NYC Emergency Management hosts Community Emergency Response Team training cycles three times a year. The next training cycle will also be a hybrid model and is scheduled to begin in spring 2022. For more information about the CERT program, or if you are interested in becoming a CERT volunteer, call 311 or visit [NYC.gov/cert](https://nyc.gov/cert).

### **Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) in New York City**

The New York City CERT program started in 2003 with 106 volunteers. Today, there are more than 1,200 credentialed CERT volunteers throughout the five boroughs. NYC CERT volunteers participate in a 10-session basic training program where they receive instruction from active members of the FDNY, NYPD and NYC Emergency Management. Volunteers are trained in



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disaster preparedness and basic emergency response skills, including fire safety, light search and rescue, disaster medical operations, and traffic management.

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