

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
#21-17

**NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT HONORS COMMUNITY EMERGENCY
RESPONSE TEAM MEMBERS WHO WENT ABOVE AND BEYOND IN 2016**

On Wednesday, April 26th, in celebration of National Volunteer Week, the New York City Emergency Management Department honored 40 Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members who volunteered over 100 hours of service in 2016 with both presidential and mayoral volunteer service awards. CERT members are dedicated volunteers who help to prepare their neighbors and communities for different types of disasters.

“Whether it’s organizing events to prepare their neighbors for emergencies, assisting during large community events, or responding to emergency events throughout the five boroughs, CERT volunteers are an invaluable resource for their neighborhoods,” **said NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito**. “Those being honored today are the best of the best, individuals who time and again go above and beyond to serve their communities.”

Nancy Walby, Deputy Chief of the Brooklyn 18 CERT team, has been serving the Canarsie and Marine Park neighborhoods since 2003. “I joined CERT for family reasons,” said Walby. “When the blackout happened [in 2003] it became very apparent to me that as a family we weren’t prepared. So when the CERT training came along, I thought this is a good opportunity for my family and it’s a good opportunity to give back to my community as well. It increases everybody’s survival; if you’re prepared and you help your friends and neighbors prepare, you’ve got a better chance of overcoming whatever issues may come along.”

Walby says she earned her 100+ hours in 2016 training, learning, and helping build out her Brooklyn 18 team which has swelled to over 30 active members with more on the way.

“Canarsie is a neighborhood that knows very well what kind of a flood zone it’s in, so we need to be prepared. We learned our lessons,” Nancy Walby said. “We’re always learning and we know that we have a lot of resources in Canarsie and Marine Park available to us.”

During her 14 years on the CERT team, Nancy Walby has largely focused her efforts on the Canarsie area; volunteering during flooding events and assisting the NYPD in locating lost and vulnerable older adults when Silver Alerts are issued.

A total of seven Brooklyn-based CERT members were recognized for their service at Wednesday’s first annual event in recognition of volunteers who go above and beyond in serving their communities.

The New York City CERT program started in 2003 with 106 volunteers. There are currently more than 1,300 credentialed CERT volunteers representing more than 50 teams throughout New York City.

For more information about the CERT program, or if you are interested in becoming a CERT volunteer, call 311 or visit NYC.gov/EmergencyManagement

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CAPTIONS:

NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito and NYC Service's Chief Service Officer Paula Gavin honor Brooklyn Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) members who served over 100 hours in 2016. *From left:* Chief Service Officer Paula Gavin, Lewis Igelhart, Glenn Wolin, Sal D'Alessio, William Vitale, Eric Hebert, Nancy Walby, Commissioner Joseph Esposito.

NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito and NYC Service's Chief Service Officer Paula Gavin honor Brooklyn 18 CERT Deputy Chief Nancy Walby. Vitale spent over 100 hours in 2016 serving the Canarsie and Marine Park communities. *From left:* Chief Service Officer Paula Gavin, Nancy Walby, Commissioner Joseph Esposito.

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