



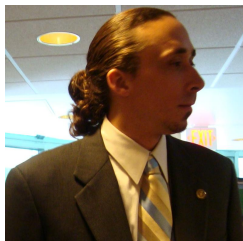
The CERT Report

February 2009

Change in Leadership



Lauren Ginsberg, former Program Manager



Herman Schaffer, Director of Community Outreach

On October 30th the NYC CERT program experienced a change in leadership. Lauren Ginsberg, CERT Program Manager for the past two years, is moving on to work in the counseling unit at New York University as well as build her private practice. Herman Schaffer, Chair of the NYC Citizen Corps Council (CCC) and OEM Director of Community Outreach, will shepherd the next chapter of NYC CERT.

Ginsberg was instrumental in advancing CERT. She oversaw the development of the Standard Operating Guidelines and updated the curriculum to work in an urban environment--differentiating the CERT program in New York City from everywhere else.

Ginsberg is confident that the program will continue to grow: "The volunteers' dedication to preparing their communities for emergencies and disasters is what makes this program such a huge success."

Schaffer began his career with the Peace Corps in Zambia where, among other duties, he coordinated a water and sanitation education campaign. He came to New York City as a case worker at Safe Horizon's Disaster Assistance Service Center, working on behalf of 9/11 victims.

Schaffer joined OEM as chair of the CCC, and completed a masters degree in social work soon after. For the past three years he has been establishing a network of community-based and faith-based organizations that pool resources and use connections to respond to emergencies in an efficient and organized manner.

According to OEM Commissioner Joseph Bruno, "From both an organizational standpoint and at the personal level, having Herman oversee CERT makes sense. The CCC--relatively inactive when he joined OEM three years ago--is now a vibrant body with more than 20 active member agencies involved in many aspects of preparedness and recovery."

Schaffer has focused on developing the existing teams by getting OEM more involved with post-training. "Now that there are 55 teams for the 59 community districts in the City," Schaffer explained, "we need to support the existing teams and engage the volunteers to help them stay active in their communities."

Join us in wishing both Lauren and Herman the best of luck in their new responsibilities.

September Disaster Simulation

CERT Instructor is Daily News Hero of the Month



Lt. John Eccleston, center, with FDNY Commissioner Scoppetta, representatives from the Daily News and other FDNY officials at the newspaper's office.

On October 27, the NY Daily News named CERT instructor and FDNY lieutenant John Eccleston Hero of the Month.

After being promoted to lieutenant in 1996, Eccleston became a part of the American Red Cross/FDNY Disaster Assistance Recovery Team (DART). DART sends volunteers to disaster sites to assist in recovery efforts and resource distribution.

Eccleston was inspired to lead a life of service by his father who taught him to treat everyone with love and respect. During his initial years as a firefighter at Manhattan Engine Company 16, he learned the value of human life and dignity. He credits his fellow officers at Staten Island Ladder Company 79 for extending themselves at every emergency, fiercely protecting life and property.

Lt. Eccleston has experienced much in his time with FDNY and DART, and has a couple pieces of advice: "All people are good and they deserve your help. It doesn't matter what they look like, what they believe in or where they were born. Look past everything else and only see the humanity. Also, As a CERT member, you have chosen to be active in a life of volunteer service. That makes you special! Be good at what you do. Train often, stay involved. Make a difference in the world. Be proud of yourselves because you should be!"

Written by Janet Portuallo, Bronx 11 Secretary

The day I spent at FDNY's training academy on Randall's Island was amazing. I was accompanied by fellow Bronx 11 CERT members Frank Shelton and Joe Thompson and we met CERT members from all five boroughs. One thing that struck me was no matter where the volunteers came from, we were all excited to be there.

We started the day laughing over breakfast, and then the fun began. OEM and FDNY instructors led an informative tabletop exercise. They separated us into three teams, and asked us to name our team and select a team chief, a recorder, an operations leader, a logistics leader, a medical operations leader, and a stage leader. Once this was accomplished, we came up with a plan of action to direct traffic and assist "victims," actors as well as dummies spread throughout the scene. We also prepared an up-to-date log of all vital statistics to provide to first responders when they arrived.

After the tabletop exercise, we got the chance to practice our training hands on. Instructors set up a disaster scene and, without any knowledge of what it would be, asked us to perform light search and rescue, traffic control, and triage.

After the exercise, our instructors debriefed with us. Although some of us were frustrated that we had made mistakes, including me, I learned that it did not mean that we didn't succeed. The excitement that I felt in the beginning was still strong.

I realized that mistakes can be avoided with practice, but learning to function as a team with people you have never met before is what gets the job done.

I cannot thank OEM, FDNY and NYPD enough for all they taught us. They showed us just a little piece of the world in which they live. Not many people would do what they do and I, among many others, appreciate and thank them for it. If you know of someone who feels the same, tell them about CERT. We are in this together.



CERT members arrive on the scene of the mock disaster at Randall's Island.

Sanchez Represents CERT

CERT Instructor is NY1 New Yorker of the Week



Paramedic Gary Smiley as he delivers presents.

This past holiday season CERT instructor and Paramedic Gary Smiley was named NY1 New Yorker of the Week. Smiley and 11 other members of the FDNY use their own money to buy and deliver presents to needy Brooklyn families.

Operation Santa, as the tradition is known, began 18 years ago to bring presents to children and their families who need them the most.

"It's a way to give back other than what we normally do as first responders," says Smiley. He and the rest of the team trade in their usual work uniforms and opt instead to dress up as holiday characters, substituting an ambulance full of presents for Santa's sleigh.

He reads over 1,000 letters to determine the neediest families, which combined with his normal responsibilities is no small task. Nevertheless, he and the team "look forward to this every year."

Congratulations to Paramedic Smiley for his recognition and for proving that the spirit of the CERT program extends beyond emergencies.

Team Chiefs Graduate from FBI Citizens' Academy



CERT Team chiefs Sue Macinick QN 11, Kim Teixeira QN 1, Pat Salin MN 6, and Grisel Amador BK 7 at the FBI headquarters in New York City.



Will Sanchez, Manhattan 8 CERT member, ran the 26.2-mile NYC marathon promoting CERT the whole way. His t-shirt, that read "CERT WILL," spurred shouts of "Go CERT Will!" from spectators all the way to the finish line.

Will Sanchez and Joy Johnson run in the NYC Marathon.

On November 24, four CERT team chiefs graduated from the FBI Citizens' Academy. Participation in the academy is an honor and distinction reserved for a select few. The CERT team chiefs who participated, pictured above, have proven their dedication and service to New York City.

The classes cover topics from organized crime to counterterrorism. Similar to CERT, participants study 11 modules in as many weeks, specific to the topics that agents encounter in the field.

One of the highlights of the class is a trip to Fort Dix, NJ, where the participants learn about firearm safety.

Participants also learn about how the FBI operates on the local level, debunking many of the myths that surround the Bureau.

CERT is in touch with the contact at the NYC division of the FBI, so if you are interested in participating in the academy, contact your team chief for further details.

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

Remember, CERT is always looking to train motivated individuals to prepare for and respond to emergencies.

Seven training sessions start in the following areas at the end of February:

Bronx 10, Queens 12/13, Brooklyn 3, Staten Island, Lower Manhattan, Upper Manhattan, South Brooklyn.

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