

For Immediate Release

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NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT HOSTS GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR 111 COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT) VOLUNTEERS

February 16, 2017 – New York City Emergency Management First Deputy Commissioner Calvin Drayton, NYPD Auxiliary Deputy Inspector Phylis Byrne, and FDNY Deputy Chief James Brosi presided over a graduation ceremony for 111 Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers. The graduation was held Monday evening, February 13th, at the 32 BJ Training Fund in Manhattan. The CERT graduates completed a training program in disaster preparedness and basic emergency response skills that included lessons in fire safety, search and rescue, traffic management, first aid and triage. After completing training, CERTs support their local communities by assisting City agencies that prepare for and respond to emergencies. 73 of the graduates participated in a 10-week training program last fall, while 38 participated in a 5-week expedited summer program which met twice weekly.

“CERT volunteers play a vital role in how New York City communities prepare for and respond to emergencies,” said **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito**. “These graduates will be joining a proud group of New Yorkers who are ready and willing to help their friends and neighbors when we need them most.”

During the ceremony, the 2016 John D. Solomon Award for Exemplary Service in Emergency Preparedness Education was presented to William Vitale, Deputy Team Chief of Brooklyn 10/11 CERT. A member of CERT since 2008, Vitale was recognized for his extensive efforts to prepare the south Brooklyn community for emergencies and for assisting his NYC neighbors during emergencies including the Borough Park building explosion and Winter Storm Jonas last year. The Brooklyn 10/11 CERT team serves neighborhoods including Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, Fort Hamilton, Bensonhurst, Bath Beach, Gravesend, and Mapleton. The team was also award the New York City CERT Award for Excellence in Deployment and Emergency Response last year, in recognition of their exemplary service to their neighborhoods. The Brooklyn 10/11 team will be gaining nine new member following the graduation. Of the 111 graduates 37 will be joining Brooklyn CERT teams, 24 will be joining Manhattan teams, 14 will join Bronx teams, 31 will join Queens teams, and 5 will join the Staten Island team.

NYC Emergency Management also unveiled a new CERT training [video](#) during the ceremony which highlights the CERT program in New York City and will be used at community outreach events to encourage interested community members to volunteer.

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) in New York City

The New York City CERT program started in 2003 with 106 volunteers. The new Cycle 26 CERT graduates will join more than 1,300 credentialed CERT volunteers representing more than 50 teams throughout New York City. The 111 graduates received training from a number of the



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city's highly trained emergency responders, including 20 FDNY instructors, 11 FDNY/EMS instructors, 7 NYPD instructors, and 12 NYC Emergency Management liaisons.

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

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MEDIA CONTACT: Nancy Silvestri/Justin Bennett (718) 422-4888

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