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**PORT RICHMOND STATEN ISLAND COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE
TEAM (CERT) WINS FIRST OEM DEPLOYMENT AWARD**

*Port Richmond CERT was deployed to more than 50 planned events and 85 emergencies,
culminating in over 56,000 hours of service to the community*

April 29, 2013 — Commissioner Joseph F. Bruno today presented the Port Richmond Staten Island Community Response Team (CERT) with the New York City Office of Emergency Management’s first-ever “Excellence in Deployment and Emergency Response Award.” The award recognizes a community emergency response team that has demonstrated a strong history of deploying for planned and unplanned events and excellence in response to emergencies in the past two years. Four other CERT teams were finalists for the award: Brooklyn 8, Bronx 12, Manhattan 11, and Queens 6. Commissioner Bruno was joined by NYC Fire Department Commissioner Salvatore J. Cassano and Police (NYPD) Deputy Inspector Phylis Byrne at Staten Island University Hospital.

“Whether it was alerting residents in advance of Hurricane Sandy or staffing the shelters after the hurricane had come through, the Port Richmond Community Emergency Response Team has been at the vanguard of deployment across Staten Island and the city at large,” said Commissioner Bruno. “The competition was highly competitive, but in all its actions this team has shown that it is truly deserving of OEM’s first-ever Excellence in Deployment and Emergency Response award. Congratulations to Chief John Tidona and all the members of the Port Richmond CERT.”

Over the past two years the Port Richmond CERT has deployed to over 50 planned events and over 85 emergencies, including aiding the FDNY fighting brush fires and working with NY Police Department to conduct missing person searches. The team has also attended over 60 crowd and traffic management events, supported 18 search-and-rescues, and conducted medical triage at over 60 events and races. The team has built strong relationships with its local fire houses and police precincts, Con Edison, and the Port Authority.

Prior to the arrival of Hurricane Sandy, the Port Richmond CERT team began to canvas parts of Zone A on Staten Island, informing residents that they should evacuate. During Sandy, the team staffed or supported shelters, cleared downed trees, aided in missing person searches, assisted at food distribution sites and at donation centers, and conducted dwelling checks to provide food, water and supplies to homebound and those without power. The team went above and beyond to assist Egg Harbor Township, NJ CERT with its hurricane efforts. In the past two years the team has exceeded 56,000 community service hours.

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) in New York City

The New York City CERT program started in 2003 with 106 volunteers. Today, the City has 54 CERT teams and more than 1,200 volunteers representing all five boroughs. New York City CERT volunteers participate in a 10-week training program in disaster preparedness and basic emergency response skills taught by active and retired members of the Police and Fire Departments. After completing

training that includes lessons in fire safety, search and rescue, first aid and triage, CERTs support their local communities by assisting City agencies that prepare for and respond to emergencies. CERT volunteers also work to educate their communities about emergency preparedness through OEM's Ready New York campaign.

New York City CERT members have a demonstrated history of assisting the City with response and preparedness outreach. Recently, more than 600 CERT members logged over 20,000 hours of volunteer service during Hurricane Sandy. For example, prior to the storm CERT members on Staten Island canvassed neighborhoods in Zone A reminding residents that they were in an evacuation zone. During the storm CERT members supported the Healthcare Facility Evacuation Center by staffing its call center at OEM. Members also staffed shelters, OEM's logistics center, and the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). After the storm, CERT members reported to distribution sites to hand out water and food. They also assisted with pumping fuel from tankers at Floyd Bennett Field and in the Rockaways to get fuel to emergency vehicles and storm-damaged areas.

The CERT concept was first developed in 1985 by the City of Los Angeles Fire Department, which recognized citizens would likely be on their own during the early stages of a disaster. The Los Angeles CERT training proved to be so beneficial that FEMA decided the program should be made available to communities across the United States. In 1994, FEMA and the Los Angeles Fire Department expanded the CERT curriculum. And, in 2003, FEMA's Citizen Corps Council adopted CERT as a primary way to encourage people to volunteer to make their communities safer, stronger and better prepared to respond to emergencies. There are currently more than 3,500 active CERT programs in the United States.

The next round of CERT training will begin this summer. 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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