
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#26-23

RISING ABOVE: NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND NYC COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT) LAUNCH CITYWIDE FLOOD PREPAREDNESS DAY OF ACTION IN JACKSON HEIGHTS, QUEENS

August 23, 2023 — NYC Emergency Management (NYCEM) and its dedicated NYC Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers sprang into action today, holding a comprehensive day of action titled “*Rising Above: Citywide Flood Preparedness Day of Action & Resource Fair*” based out of Diversity Plaza, a community hub nestled in the heart of Jackson Heights, Queens. This public engagement initiative was laser-focused on arming communities across all five boroughs with knowledge and resources to combat the threat of flooding. The day was a step forward in the City of New York’s goal of promoting proactive preparedness and fostering resilient communities in the fight against severe flooding. While supplies last, New Yorkers can still obtain flood alarms and barriers at locations detailed on nyc.gov/risingabove23.

"Preparedness isn't a one-time event; it's a continuous process, demanding our attention, meticulous planning, and robust community engagement. Our Day of Action embodies the proactive posture our city is taking to rise above the climate challenges that come our way," said **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Zach Iscol**. "At the heart of this process, our dedicated Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers will play a crucial role. They embody the spirit of resilience and proactive safety, reaching into every corner of our neighborhoods, from Throggs Neck to Bushwick, from Port Richmond to the South Street Seaport, to Jackson Heights, in order to ensure that our city and its residents are well-equipped and prepared, especially when faced with emergencies like flooding. This level of preparedness, this culture of resilience, and this Day of Action helps this city and our residents to successfully rise above whatever challenges may come our way."

“Our climate is changing and we’ve all witnessed the more intense storms and flooding that are a part of this new reality,” said **NYC Chief Climate Officer and DEP Commissioner Rohit T. Aggarwala**. “We are investing billions of dollars to make New York City more resilient to these storms and in the meantime we are arming New Yorkers with the knowledge they need to be aware of dangerous weather and the tools they need to protect themselves and their property.”

"Our office works hand in hand with NYC Emergency Management to protect New Yorkers against the impacts of climate change, including the increasing threat of flooding," said **Victoria Cerullo, Acting Executive Director of the Mayor’s Office of Climate & Environmental Justice**. “Today’s Day of Action, an agency and community collaboration, embodies our shared commitment to flood preparedness and to addressing climate change with a strong focus on equity and environmental justice. We are meeting the climate change moment - proactively planning, preparing, and growing more resilient together."

Adrienne Lever, Director of the NYC Public Engagement Unit said: “Our collaborative effort in flood preparedness is about empowering New Yorkers with the right information and resources. We don't just wait for people to come to us; we go to them, ensuring that everyone has the tools they need to rise above the challenges of extreme weather. Together with NYC Emergency Management, we are enhancing the way our city responds to emergencies, focusing on a more resilient and connected community.”

"In Queens, we know flooding is a real issue we must to address now, not later - as we've had to learn after living through Hurricane Ida two years ago and Superstorm Sandy more than 10 years ago," said **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.** "Whether you live in an inland community or a shoreline community, it's important to know how to prepare and prevent flooding in your home. As we navigate this tropical storm season, I'm happy to work with our partners in the city to help our community members do just that."

Council Member Shekar Krishnan said “The stark and tragic consequences of climate change are evident: our subways, streets, and housing succumb to flooding, and we endure relentless cycles of extreme heat and biting cold, endangering especially the lives of our most vulnerable neighbors. Here in Queens, during Hurricane Ida, eleven people perished in basement apartments because of flooding. I am proud to join with the New York City Emergency Management in organizing this educational event. Our communities must be equipped with essential flood barriers. The need for a sustainable and resilient city, protected from rapid climate change, could not be more urgent.”

During a rally at the event, local community leaders and groups went over the City’s emergency response system, explored new advancements in flood detection technologies, and emphasized the vital role that local communities play in effective disaster management.

As part of the hands-on approach to the Day of Action, CERT volunteers distributed and demonstrated the use of flood alarms and barriers, which are vital tools to safeguard homes and businesses during flooding incidents. After the demonstration, Commissioner Iscol and CERT visited local businesses to distribute flood alarms and information about flood preparedness, demonstrating ways to protect themselves during floods. This Day of Action served as a timely reminder of the importance of preparedness in the face of the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events due to climate change.

CERT members were also activated and deployed to conduct canvassing and engage in vital conversations across specific neighborhoods in New York City. Focusing on areas including the Bronx's Throggs Neck, Brooklyn's Bushwick, Queens’ Jackson Heights, Staten Island's Port Richmond, and Manhattan’s South Street Seaport district, these dedicated volunteers reached out to residents, sharing critical information and resources tailored to local needs. Through these one-on-one interactions, CERT members are taking tangible steps to foster community resilience and preparedness, ensuring that the unique needs and characteristics of each neighborhood are understood and addressed in the city's ongoing emergency management efforts.

Volunteers at Diversity Plaza were present to assist members of the community in signing up for Notify NYC, the City’s verified hyperlocal emergency alert system available in 14 different languages, including American Sign Language. Special attention was given to the Notify NYC Basement Group, which offers specific alerts tailored to New Yorkers with basement apartments that face unique challenges during flood events.

In alignment with NYCEM’s Strengthening Communities program—a strategic initiative focused on enhancing emergency preparedness, fostering community resilience, and fortifying local resources and networks—partners **Woodside on the Move** and **Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) Queens** joined the event, enhancing collective efforts through their unique insights and expertise. Other organizations included **82nd Street Partnership**, **Chhaya**, **FloodNet**, and **Center for NYC Neighborhoods**. The collaboration with these organizations served to reinforce local resources and networks, reflecting NYCEM’s ongoing commitment to building a resilient and prepared community.

###

MEDIA CONTACT: Press Office (718) 422-4888

STAY CONNECTED: Twitter: @NotifyNYC (emergency notifications)
@nycemergencymgt (emergency preparedness info)
Facebook: /NYCemergencymanagement