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A Day in the Life of a First Responder: *OEMers Learn About Life in the Field First-hand*



OEM responds to a fire at the North River Wastewater Treatment Plant in Harlem on July 20, 2011. Photo credit: DNAINfo/Tuan Nguyen.

By **Christina Farrell**

A minor bus crash, a supermarket evacuated due to high carbon monoxide readings, an interagency meeting for a major synagogue fire, and a four-alarm alarm fire at a DEP sewage treatment plant: these were the incidents that I was exposed to during my time in the OEM field response program.

OEM's Training and Exercises Division has been running the Field Response Program in conjunction with Operations since March 2011. So far, 15 OEMers have completed the program. To participate, you must complete several prerequisite courses, including ICS 100 and 200, CIMS Orientation, Watch Command Orientation, and Field Preparedness Training.

Upon signing up for the program, I was assigned a three-day period in July and given the option of working Tour 1 (0600 to 1400) or Tour 2 (1400 to 2200). I chose the first tour, although when I got up extra early and in the dark on the first day and my son commented "Mommy, people don't go to work in the night,"

I did doubt my choice a little. However, a near-empty BQE, which cut my usual commute in half, later affirmed my temporary hours.

Prior to my turn in the program, I met with Anita Sher, director of training, and John Postel, director of response, to review the program, get advice (such as bring a bag lunch and wear comfortable shoes) and receive the Field Response Go Bag. I added a few personal items to the bag and so when I received my first call that there was a job to go to, I was ready.

I was assigned to Rod Tierney, FDNY Lieutenant and Response Tour Supervisor. Rod was very patient, explaining the different aspects of his job and what he has learned during his time at OEM. It became very apparent that I would learn things in the field, but it was also eye-opening to talk to another OEMer whose job and perspective are very different than mine.

Responding to four jobs over the course of the week gave me a good idea of the types of incidents OEM responds to.

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As agency life returns to a normal pace following a very active summer season, the OEM newsletter returns with a third quarter edition.

This edition of the Sit Rep contains the latest and greatest employee happenings, event recaps, highlights of successful agency programs, and a new feature series: the restaurant review. Thank you to Commissioner Bruno and Christina Farrell for contributing to this edition.

As always, your story ideas and feedback are welcome and greatly appreciated. Please send them to Nancy Greco at: NGreco@oem.nyc.gov.

Ten Years Later: Remembering 9/11



OEM Hosts Open House on 10-Year Anniversary

OEMers past and present reunited at OEM's headquarters for an open house in the late afternoon on September 11 following a ceremony at Ground Zero.

Former OEM staff members and emergency responders who worked for the City in 2001 were welcomed to the agency to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the events of 9/11 with their colleagues. The event served as an opportunity for guests to come together as a community in reflection and remembrance.



OEM Honored at Citi Field for Mets 9/11 Tribute

OEM joined members of New York City's emergency services and members of the 2001 New York Mets at a pre-game September 11th memorial ceremony at Citi Field. As the sun set, the Mets and Cubs lined the diamond alongside members of eight NYC service agencies. After a moment of silence, Marc Anthony sang the national anthem. First responders and families from the non-profit organization Tuesday's Children unfurled a 30,000-square-foot American flag across the outfield, while thousands of fans held electric candles.

Following the anthem, John Franco and Mike Piazza participated in the ceremonial first pitch. The first responders walked off the field to applause and a bagpipe corps playing "Amazing Grace."



9/11 Day of Service Volunteers Assist OEM

In commemoration of the 10th anniversary of 9/11, millions of volunteers participated in service projects across the country. Led by MyGoodDeed, the "I Will" campaign encouraged people to connect with volunteer projects for the 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance.

In support of the 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance, OEM and the NYC Citizen Corps Council facilitated a volunteer project for New York Cares at P.S. 140 - Nathan Strauss Middle School. Volunteers learned about the importance of emergency preparedness and made Go Bags for Ready New York preparedness presentations. With the help of more than 60 volunteers from American Express, GlaxoSmithKline, JP Morgan Chase, and the NBA, 450 Go Bags were assembled in record time.

Learning About Agency Partners Over Lunch

Did you know that the Port of New York and New Jersey, the busiest port on the East Coast, moved over \$175 billion worth of cargo over the past year? If your wealth of knowledge neglects these facts, never fear: the Agency 101 program will help you brush up on the essentials of OEM's partner agencies.

"We assume that everyone knows what other agencies do, but not everyone does," said Anita Sher, director of training.

The Trainings and Exercises unit started the Agency 101 program in 2008 to give OEM staff a better understanding of what our partner agencies do, the services they provide and the resources they have.

Originally featuring the CIMS agencies, the Agency 101 series has grown to include presentations by additional partners and programs like the Regional Catastrophic Planning Group. A testament to the program's success, the Operations Division made the Agency 101 series a mandatory part of its training requirements.

"What started out as a months-long project has evolved into a program of three years," Sher said. "It's been a great tool for the whole agency."

Most recently, OEM hosted an Agency 101 program on August 17 featuring the US Coast Guard. Frank Fiumano, Chief of Port Security/Contingency Planning for the Coast Guard's New York sector, spoke about safety and security issues in the Port of New York and New Jersey.

"What has been fun is to see how OEM staff is blown away by the resources and capabilities of these agencies that they weren't aware of," Sher said. "It's like discovering hidden gems."

The agency discussions are usually held during the early afternoon, and the Training & Exercises unit encourages participants to bring lunch. "We welcome the input of our OEM colleagues," Sher said. "Let us know who you are interested in learning more about."

OEMers who are unable to attend the Agency 101 program can still learn more about partner agencies. You can find copies of presentations from previous programs in the Common drive at: W:\Common\External Agency 101.

If you have ideas about agencies or programs that you would like to see featured in upcoming presentations, please e-mail Anita at asher@oem.nyc.gov.



The latest Agency 101 program featured the US Coast Guard. Here, the fleet prepares for Hurricane Irene. Photo credit: US Coast Guard Station New York.

A Day in the Life of a First Responder (continued from page 1)

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Once we got to the various jobs, the level of respect other first responders have for OEM and our Citywide Incident Commanders was apparent. More often than not, the primary agencies have requested OEM and the OEM staff member assumes a leadership position when he or she arrives. To hear people refer to CIMS and its application in the field was especially interesting for me after only having used it in training or exercise situations.

Upon completing the program, I was sent an evaluation form. Everyone who completes the program fills out these forms. Here are some comments from other OEM staff members:

"The collaboration between the responders and other agencies and vendors was really terrific. The amount of knowledge and information shared really stood out in my mind. I gained more of an appreciation for responders and I'm grateful to have had this experience."
Tony Marzuillo, COOP

"Although my time in Response wasn't as eventful as I had hoped, it was apparent that OEM is a respected agency. Having an active role in the response to an incident made me feel empowered, allowing me to see first hand what the job entails and gave me a deeper respect for CICs."
Annette Santiago, Human Resources

"Field responders have a unique set of skills that includes intimate knowledge of the city and the way the city works, continual concern for the safety of themselves and those around them, and great patience and people management skills including knowing when to stand back and when to intervene to facilitate progress. I really enjoyed this brief time, observing their work."
Timothie Biggs, GIS

The Field Response Program is a great opportunity for OEM staff to be exposed to another role OEM plays. I would encourage everyone to sign up for this enlightening experience. If you are interested, please e-mail training@oem.nyc.gov.

OEM Celebrates National Preparedness Month



A young volunteer helps to hand out preparedness information on the streets of Times Square.

During September OEM hosted 57 emergency preparedness events, registered almost 2,000 people for Notify NYC, and teamed up with hundreds of public and private sector partners to prepare thousands of employees and volunteers through our Partners in Preparedness program. Here are some of the month's highlights:

National Preparedness Month Five Borough Kick-Off

Kick-off events took place this year at the MetroTech Center in Brooklyn, the Hub in the Bronx, Times Square, the Flushing Library and the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. Thanks to everyone who volunteered at one of the sites!



In honor of National Preparedness Month, OEM closed the NASDAQ in Times Square on 9/1.

Pet Preparedness Day

On September 26, OEM joined the Animal Planning Task Force in Union Square to teach New Yorkers about preparing their pets for emergencies. Agency partners including Animal Care and Control, ASPCA, the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals, NYC Health Department, and the NYC Veterinary Emergency Response Team offered general information, free microchipping, rabies vaccinations, and engraved identification tags.



Cynthia Barton's dog Rose helps remind pet owners to prepare for their pets, too!

FDNY CPR Training

OEM teamed up with the FDNY to offer five CPR training programs throughout National Preparedness Month, including trainings for Partners in Preparedness and for OEM staff. Thanks to the FDNY's Mobile CPR Training Unit, OEM staff had the opportunity to learn about the key components of CPR from American Heart Association Certified CPR instructors on September 30. Each participant received a mannequin to practice the hands-only CPR.



Mini Anne, Justin Land's CPR mannequin, sits comfortably atop his desk in stylish sunglasses and gear after she was revived during CPR training.

Partners in Preparedness 2011

On September 26, OEM honored the Red Cross in Greater NY, the NYC Department of Education, and New York University at the Partners in Preparedness Reception held at the American Museum of Natural History. OEM also premiered a student-produced cartoon, "Ready, Set, Prepare Yourself!" at the reception.



Students from Goldie Maple Academy in the Rockaways performed a song about having a Go Bag after their cartoon premiered at the reception.

Joe Bruno's Restaurant Recommendations

In welcoming Big City out-of-towners to NYC, Commissioner Bruno shared his recommendations on the best local restaurants. Here are the hot spots that made it to the top of his list:

Fragole

394 Court Street

(Between 1 Pl. and Carroll Street)

Why it's a Joe Bruno favorite:
"Authentic Italian cuisine with very reasonable prices."

Saul

140 Smith Street

Why it's a Joe Bruno favorite:
"Top draw and Michelin rated. It's small and unpretentious, though a little more expensive."

Broken English

*68 Bergen Street
(Off of Smith Street)*

Why it's a Joe Bruno favorite:
"Very nice spot with a nouveau menu; the Smith Street scene."

Noodle Pudding

38 Henry Street

Why it's a Joe Bruno favorite:
"Across the park from OEM. A very nice spot. Note that there's no sign on the door."

Nine-D

462 Court Street

Why it's a Joe Bruno favorite:
"Small, inexpensive restaurant in Carroll Gardens with very good food. If you like spicy, try the Pad Kee Mow."

Marco Polo

345 Court Street

(Corner of Union Street)

Why it's a Joe Bruno favorite:
"Old fashioned Italian cooking with a more formal ambiance; good food! Pasta made in an Italian cheese wheel is a specialty."

Buttermilk Channel

524 Court Street

Why it's a Joe Bruno favorite:
"Nice restaurant, though a bit noisy. It's good to go a little early (6 – 7PM)."

Enoteca on Court

347 Court Street

Why it's a Joe Bruno favorite:
"Great spot for authentic Italian pizza and light dishes. Great salads."

You can check out a great map of Commissioner Bruno's recommendations created by GIS in W:\Common\JFB_restaurant_recommendations.



Broken English, located off of Smith Street, is one of the Commissioner's favorite nearby restaurants.

OEM Hosts Big City Emergency Managers

OEM welcomed the Big City Emergency Managers (BCEM) to New York City October 19-21 for their fall 2011 meeting. BCEM, which includes top emergency management officials from the 15 largest cities and metropolitan regions across the country, met to discuss issues including lessons learned from Hurricane Irene,

post-disaster housing, emergency sheltering, and the future of emergency management, among other topics.

Participants were also treated to a 9/11 Memorial tour, a fireboat ride, breakfast at Gracie Mansion, and an OEM tour. BCEM last convened in New York in September 2006, shortly before OEM moved into its new headquarters at 165 Cadman Plaza East.



BCEM toured the 9/11 Memorial on October 19.

Seasons of Love: Marriages & Milestones



It was a summer of love for OEMers! Rob Maldonado and his wife, Anne (right), were married on August 26 at St. Patrick's cathedral in Grand Haven, Michigan, a cottage town on the shores of Lake Michigan. OEM's very own Chaplain Monsignor Romano officiated. Both Rob and Anne are triathletes, so the theme of the wedding was swim, bike, and run. Instead of a limo, the couple rode bikes away from the church.

Congratulations to Jillian Osorio, who got married this spring. And Tayo

Ajayi married his lovely wife Chioma on May 21 in Bowie, Maryland.

Ben Krakauer married his lovely bride Rebecca in Ann Arbor, Michigan on August 28. Rebecca is a graduate student at Columbia University studying for her MPH/MSW. Ken Lambert also married in August.

Also in nuptial news, Jake Cooper proposed to fiancée Amy Way this summer. Jake and Amy plan to marry in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on July 7, 2012. Best wishes to all!

Baby Boom: OEM Family Grows by Four Girls and Two Boys



Aliza Mandelbaum
09/21/2011
8 lbs, 6 ozs
Born to Natan & Ana Mandelbaum



Nicole Alexis Johnson
09/09/2011
6 lbs, 10 ozs
Born to Gary & Glenda Johnson



Clara Grace Sion
08/16/2011
8 lbs, 8 ozs
Born to Lauren & Mike Sion



Oliver Polihronis Reich
08/20/2011
7 lbs, 13 ozs
Born to Lefty Zagoreos & Fred Reich



Benjamin Lantz Andrus
07/22/2011
9 lbs, 8 ozs
Born to Carlin & Sheila Andrus



Krissa Janelle Williams
07/31/2011
8 lbs, 2 ozs
Born to Ival Grant-Williams & Chris Williams

A Summertime Staple: Pot Luck 2011

