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**For Immediate Release**

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**NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT WELCOMES 39 NEW MEMBERS TO NEW YORK CITY'S COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (CERT) AS THE PROGRAM COMMEMORATES ITS 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

*New graduates are joining 24 divisions of credentialed volunteers to help their communities during emergencies*

**December 5, 2023** – As [International Volunteer Day](#) is observed around the globe, a day that recognizes the efforts of volunteers impacting their communities, the New York City Emergency Management Department welcomed 39 new Community Emergency Response Team (NYC CERT) volunteers to its program during a hybrid graduation ceremony on Thursday, November 30. The NYC CERT basic training cycle includes 11 sessions that focus on disaster preparedness and emergency response, equipping volunteers with skills in basic fire safety, search and rescue, traffic management, and first aid and triage. NYC Emergency Management offered the training program with instructors from the New York City Fire Department (FDNY) and New York City Police Department (NYPD) Auxiliary Unit. NYC CERT is also commemorating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

“NYC CERT members are vital to New York City’s emergency preparedness. These volunteers are New Yorkers from every borough, committed to supporting our city during emergencies,” said **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Zach Iscol**. “We congratulate the new class of CERT members, their dedication to their communities strengthens the city’s resilience and we thank them for answering the call to serve.”

“For two decades, NYC CERT members have been invested in their communities and played a vital role in the public safety and security of our city as a whole,” said **NYPD Commissioner Edward A. Caban**. “The entire NYPD congratulates and welcomes the newest members of this critical program and thanks NYC Emergency Management, FDNY, and every CERT instructor, trainer, and staff member for their dedication and support.”

“NYC Emergency Management’s Community Emergency Response Teams are a great asset to this city’s first responders,” said **Fire Commissioner Laura Kavanagh**. “The FDNY has been a longtime partner with CERT, and the impact of these dedicated volunteers cannot be overstated. Their training and commitment ensure that our communities are prepared and strong. We look forward to seeing the work of these new CERT team members.”

During the graduation, Manhattan Division 3 CERT received the Joanne Webb-Dixon Award for their extensive work in community preparedness through building and expanding partnerships in their community. The award was presented by NYC Emergency Management Deputy Commissioner for Community Engagement, Herman Schaffer.

“We are thrilled to welcome the new class of CERT members,” said **NYC Emergency Management Deputy Commissioner Community Preparedness Herman Schaffer**. “We congratulate all 39 volunteers for completing their rigorous training, that will have meaningful impact in their communities. We also want to congratulate our Joanne Webb-Dixon Award recipient for their great work in community preparedness.”

Most recently, NYC CERT members have responded to both planned and unplanned emergency deployments. These deployments included: the Halloween Festival at Owls Head Park, National Night Out events with NYPD in all boroughs, and cultural events at Gracie Mansion. CERT members were also able to support the Asylum Seeker Respite Centers, flooding preparedness Days of Action in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens. The volunteers were also deployed for 9/11 memorial events, and the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade.

CERT members also work year-round to ensure their communities are prepared for emergencies, providing information and resources to assist residents with creating an emergency plan for their friends and family. NYC Emergency Management hosts CERT training cycles three times a year.

Since its launch, NYC CERT has responded to a host of emergencies, and local divisions quickly adapt to the City’s specific emergency needs. CERT members also work year-round to ensure their communities are prepared for emergencies, providing information and resources to assist residents with creating an emergency plan for their friends and family. NYC Emergency Management hosts Community Emergency Response Team training cycles three times a year. For more information about the program, or if you are interested in becoming a volunteer, call 311 or visit [NYC.gov/cert](http://NYC.gov/cert).

#### Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) in New York City

The New York City CERT program started in 2003 with 106 volunteers. Today, there are 24 divisions of credentialed volunteers covering all 59 NYC community boards. NYC CERT volunteers participate in a 11-session basic training program where they receive instruction from active members of the FDNY, FDNY-EMS, NYPD, and NYC Emergency Management. Volunteers are trained in disaster preparedness and basic emergency response skills, including fire safety, light search and rescue, disaster medical operations, and traffic management.

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