



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**READY NEW YORK SENIOR CENTER OF THE YEAR AWARD PRESENTED TO
CATHOLIC CHARITIES BAYSIDE SENIOR CENTER**

*More than 6,800 older New Yorkers across the five boroughs participated in
Ready New York emergency preparedness training this year*

September 25, 2013 — The New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM) and the Department for the Aging (DFTA) today presented the second Ready New York Senior Center of the Year Award to Catholic Charities Bayside Senior Center, for its ongoing commitment to preparing its members for emergencies. As a part of Bayside Senior Center’s emergency preparedness program, members receive regular preparedness presentations, and are reminded several times a year to pack a Go-bag with basic supplies, medication information and contact names and numbers. The senior center keeps an updated list of all center members who may need extra assistance in times of emergency. The center regularly invites the Bayside Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) to interact and advise senior center members. Over the past year, OEM has visited more than 98 senior centers and given preparedness presentations to more than 6,800 older New Yorkers. More than 180,000 copies of My Emergency Plan, a guide that was created by OEM, the Department for the Aging and other partners specifically for the City’s older residents, have been distributed throughout the five boroughs. The award ceremony marked the unofficial end of September’s National Preparedness Month, a month-long, nationwide campaign, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, to promote emergency preparedness and encourage volunteerism. Commissioner Bruno was joined by Department for the Aging Assistant Commissioner Linda Whitaker and Catholic Charities Bayside Senior Center Program Manager Susan Shafer.

“The enthusiasm and thoroughness with which Catholic Charities Bayside Senior Center has approached preparing its seniors for emergencies has been truly inspiring,” said OEM Commissioner Joseph F. Bruno. “It is my hope that all the other senior centers in the City will follow Bayside’s example, and take an active lead in preparing older New Yorkers for a potential emergency. I want to thank the Department for the Aging for being an incredible partner in preparing its senior centers and their members for emergencies.”

“It is our responsibility to make sure we do everything in our power to make sure seniors are safe during an emergency and I want to commend people like Susan Shafer and her staff for preparing their seniors with important, potentially lifesaving instruction,” said NYC Department for the Aging Commissioner Lilliam Barrios-Paoli. “I also want to thank the Office of Emergency Management for visiting senior centers and making older New Yorkers aware of what they need to do to prepare for an emergency.”

“We are honored to receive this recognition and share it with our wonderful seniors,” remarked Program Manager Susan Shafer. “A senior center is only as good as its seniors and

their enthusiasm and willingness to learn is very inspiring. We welcome our partnership with OEM as they continue to share new information. Our seniors, who range in age from 60 to 101, are an eager audience. We go over the prepared emergency techniques we learn such as extra food and batteries, a Go Bag, etc., and the guidelines taught by OEM. They enjoy learning about ways they can stay safe during emergencies, and they put those techniques in place at home.”

The *Ready New York* program outlines three important strategies to preparing for emergencies:

- **Get Ready: *Make a Plan*** – Have at least two phone numbers – one local and one out-of-state number – which you can call in an emergency and practice the plan with adults in your home.
- **Get Set: *Prepare a Stay at Home Kit*** – During emergencies that require you to stay at home, it is important to have extra food and water for everyone in the house and a battery-operated radio for news updates.
- **Get Ready to Go: *Pack a Go Bag*** – During emergencies that require you to leave your home, have a Go Bag with emergency supplies.

Staying in Touch with OEM

The Office of Emergency Management communicates directly with the public through a variety of tools, including Notify NYC. This is just one way the City of New York communicates urgent information to city residents. In addition to sending e-mails, text messages, and phone calls, the emergency notification office has the ability to activate NYC’s Emergency Alert System (EAS), which sends information immediately via television and radio. Residents can also visit Facebook, Twitter, and the agency’s website, nyc.gov/oem for more information. The public can sign up for Notify NYC by calling 311 or going to www.NYC.gov/notifynyc.

About Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens

For over 110 years, Catholic Charities Brooklyn and Queens has been providing quality social services to the neighborhoods of Brooklyn and Queens, and currently offers more than 160 programs and services for children, youth, adults, seniors, those with developmental disabilities, and those struggling with mental illness. Catholic Charities is also one of the largest faith-based providers of affordable housing in New York City, providing 3,750 units of housing for low-income seniors, families, and the formerly homeless, including 750 units of special needs housing, throughout Brooklyn and Queens. Visit www.ccbq.org.

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