

For Immediate Release
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**QUEENS ADDS 14 VOLUNTEERS TO LOCAL COMMUNITY EMERGENCY
RESPONSE TEAMS (CERT)**

March 30, 2018 – New York City Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito, NYPD Auxiliary Deputy Inspector Phylis Byrne, and FDNY Deputy Chief James Brosi presided over a graduation ceremony for 35 Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers, including 14 who will join local Queens teams. The graduation was held on March 26 at the New York City Emergency Management Department headquarters in Brooklyn. The CERT graduates completed a training program in disaster preparedness and basic emergency response skills that included lessons in fire safety, search and rescue, traffic management, first aid and triage. After completing training, CERT volunteers support their local communities by assisting City agencies that prepare for and respond to emergencies. The Queens CERT team serving community boards 12 and 13 will gain eight new members, the team serving community boards 1 and 2 gains two members, Queens CERT 9 gains two members, Queens CERT 4 gains one, and the Queens CERT team serving community boards 7/11 also gains one.

The graduates participated in a five-week training course, which began in February and met twice weekly. In addition to the 14 CERT graduates joining Queens teams, eight will be joining Manhattan teams, seven will be joining Bronx teams, five will be joining Brooklyn teams, and one will join a Staten Island CERT team.

“My husband and I own a hair salon in Ozone Park and we live in Howard Beach. During Hurricane Sandy, we realized that the salon was one of the only businesses in Ozone Park with power. So we opened the shop, let people charge their phones and laptops, collected food and blankets, we washed people’s hair. We did then and have always found ways to bring people together in our communities that’s why I joined CERT,” said **Queens CERT graduate Sincede Savoca**.

“I like the idea of volunteering; to be honest I like to be in the midst of things. I was drawn to the CERT trainings because you don’t have to have prior knowledge of disaster response to join,” said **Queens CERT graduate Jon Butler**. “I am looking forward to being empowered to help my community and to help the City.”

“CERT volunteers play a vital role in how New York City communities prepare for and respond to emergencies,” said **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito**. “These graduates will be joining a proud group of New Yorkers who are ready and willing to help their friends and neighbors when we need them most.”

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) in New York City

The New York City CERT program started in 2003 with 106 volunteers. The new Cycle 30 CERT graduates will join more than 1,300 credentialed CERT volunteers representing more than 50 teams throughout New York City. The 35 graduates received training from a number of the city's highly trained emergency responders, including 14 FDNY instructors, 6 FDNY/EMS instructors, 5 NYPD instructors, and 8 NYC Emergency Management liaisons.

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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PHOTO CAPTIONS:

Howard Beach resident and recent Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) graduate Sincede Savoca

Jamaica, Queens resident and recent Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) graduate Jon Butler

QNS Class – CERT graduates from York College in Queens along with some of their instructors, (from left) *rear*: Craig Kligfield, FDNY Captain James Spencer, NYC Emergency Management Liaison Karen Thomas, Jon Butler, Lesly Bataille, Meghan Lee, and Bishop Knight. *Middle*: NYPD Auxiliary Det. Tammy Sheedy, Anthony DiNatale, Dimitri Bznuni, Sincede Savoca, Sheila Flores, Sonia Thompson, Eric Freeman, and NYC Emergency Management Liaison Bushra Mollick. *Front*: John-Peter Cruz, Lisa Dawson, Fumi Shiba, Scott Rubel, Audrea Newsome, and NYPD Auxiliary Sgt. Kenny Garcia.

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