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NEW YORK CITY EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PRESENTS THE READY NEW YORK SENIOR CENTER OF THE YEAR AWARD

More than 5,800 older New Yorkers across the five boroughs participated in Ready New York emergency preparedness training this year

December 5, 2019 – Seniors in Queens are taking steps to ensure they are ready for the next emergency. On December 4, New York City Emergency Management and the Department for the Aging (DFTA) presented Selfhelp Innovative Senior Center Director Mayer Waxman with this year’s Senior Center of the Year Award. The seventh annual award recognizes a senior center in the five boroughs that has made an ongoing commitment to preparing older adults for emergencies. NYC Department for the Aging Assistant Commissioner Louella Byers joined New York City Emergency First Deputy Commissioner Andrew D’Amora to present the award and discuss the importance of emergency preparedness for all New Yorkers including older adults.

“Congratulations to the seniors at the Selfhelp Innovative Senior Center for being awarded Senior Center of the Year,” said **NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Deanne Criswell**. “Mr. Waxman and the Selfhelp Innovative Senior Center staff work year-round to ensure their seniors are prepared for any emergency. Through partnerships with the NYC Department for the Aging, NYC Emergency Management will continue to spread the message of preparedness to seniors throughout the five boroughs.”

“New Yorkers can handle anything, but emergencies can take anyone by surprise. Thanks to partners like Selfhelp Innovative Senior Center, we know that older adults are better prepared,” said **NYC Department for the Aging Commissioner Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez**. “We are stronger when we work together, during emergencies and every day.”

The Selfhelp Innovative Senior Center provides daily services and programs to more than 400 older adults including fitness, art, dance, and music classes. As part of the emergency preparedness program, members received emergency preparedness presentations and are reminded to pack a Go Bag with basic supplies, medical information, and contact names and numbers. Mr. Waxman and the staff at the Selfhelp Innovative Senior Center has shown dedication to emergency preparedness by coordinating multilingual, interactive, and educational workshops for seniors. Additionally, the center has developed a strong relationship with the local fire department and with the NYPD 109th Precinct, both of which conduct regular safety presentations for seniors. During heat emergencies, the senior center also serves as one of the city’s more than 500 cooling centers activated to help New Yorkers beat the heat.

“The Selfhelp Innovative Senior Center is an embodiment of the borough it calls home — a place where individuals from all walks of life come together as one tight-knit community, strengthened through the many programs, classes and support groups offered there,” said **Queens Borough President Melinda Katz**. “Selfhelp’s dedicated staff work tirelessly to ensure the



safety of our seniors, and they deserve our most heartfelt gratitude and congratulations for this recognition.”

“I’m pleased to congratulate the Selfhelp Innovative Senior Center – known as the Benjamin Rosenthal Senior Center – for receiving this great honor,” said **U.S. Rep. Grace Meng** (D-Queens). “The facility plays a vital role in the Flushing community. It provides local seniors with a wide array of services and resources, and does outstanding work in preparing seniors for emergencies. I thank New York City Emergency Management and the Department for the Aging for recognizing the center’s efforts, and commend everybody at Selfhelp for their commitment to emergency preparedness and keeping seniors safe.”

“I want to congratulate Selfhelp Community Serves on receiving this prestigious award,” said **New York State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky**. “Founded in 1936 to help Holocaust survivors, Selfhelp has a history of assisting people from all backgrounds because we live in a diverse city of many cultures, languages and traditions. The New York City Emergency Management and the Department for the Aging have recognized Selfhelp for working to better address emergencies encountered by their clients.”

“Flushing is fortunate to be home to the Selfhelp Innovative Senior Center and the dedicated staff and volunteers delivering vital social services from health and wellness programs to educational workshops,” said **New York State Assemblywoman Nily Rozic**. “Today’s recognition is a testament to the community Selfhelp has built and its mission to ensure no one is turned away from having access to a safe space and quality care.”

“For years, Flushing’s Selfhelp Innovative Senior Center has served as a de facto town hall for our community. Known locally as Benjamin Rosenthal Senior Center, Selfhelp has long served as a focal point of our neighborhood by capably serving our senior population with everything from educational workshops to entertainment to social services and more,” said **New York City Council Member Peter Koo**. “I offer my sincerest congratulations to Selfhelp’s seniors and management, including program director Jane Qiu and CEO Stuart Kaplan.”

This year, NYC Emergency Management’s Ready New York program has hosted more than 70 presentations for older adults and trained more than 5,800 older New Yorkers in preparedness. New York City Emergency Management has also distributed more than 350,000 [My Emergency Plan](#) workbooks to New Yorkers. My Emergency Plan, designed to help New Yorkers create an emergency plan, guides users through establishing a support network, capturing important health information, evacuation planning, and gathering emergency supplies. First responders or caregivers can also use the workbook to help people during an emergency. “The Ready New York: My Emergency Plan” is available in multiple languages, including English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Arabic, Bengali, Haitian Creole, Italian, Korean, French, Polish, Urdu, and Yiddish.

About the Ready New York Program

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



- **Get Ready: *Make a Plan*** – Have at least two emergency contacts – one local and one out-of-area – who you can call in an emergency. Practice your plan with everyone 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.

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