
For Immediate Release

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THE HARBOR MIDDLE SCHOOL IN RED HOOK, BROOKLYN RECEIVES NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT’S READY SCHOOL OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Harbor Middle School presented with the 2023 ‘Ready School of the Year’ award for its exemplary work in environmental justice

June 16, 2023 — Students and staff were honored during NYC Emergency Management’s “Ready School of the Year” award ceremony, presented to P.S. 676, the Harbor Middle School in Red Hook, Brooklyn on Monday, June 12. The school was chosen due to their exceptional work advocating for environmental justice in the community. The school partnered with the RETI (Resilience Education Training Innovation) Center, a community-based organization founded after Hurricane Sandy to build climate resilience in the Red Hook neighborhood to build a garden in their schoolyard with recycled and repurposed materials. The school’s curriculum includes working on various emergency hazard related projects that the students present to neighboring elementary students and to local media. See photos [here](#).

Each year, NYC Emergency Management and the NYC Public Schools present the “Ready School of the Year” award to a school that demonstrates an outstanding commitment to emergency preparedness. New York City Emergency Management Commissioner Zach Iscol, New York City Comptroller Brad Lander, and New York City Public Schools Chief School Operations Officer Kevin Moran attended the event to deliver remarks at the ceremony.

“The students and staff of the Harbor Middle School have demonstrated exemplary dedication to combating the adverse effects of climate change through continuous education in emergency disasters and preparedness for themselves and their community,” **said NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Zach Iscol**. “We are ecstatic to present the “Ready School of the Year” award to the Harbor Middle School and congratulate the students on their diligent work in the emergency management field. I’m extremely proud of these students and hopeful they will be future leaders addressing the climate crisis.”

“The Ready School of the Year award is a terrific way to honor the students and staff in New York City schools going above and beyond to equip themselves and their communities in the face of an environmental crisis. The Harbor Middle School community demonstrates an outstanding commitment to emergency preparedness which we could all stand to learn and benefit from. The students’ initiative and drive in building climate resilience along with the passionate support of their educators inspire hope in myself and others for future leaders in climate justice,” **said Comptroller Brad Lander**.

“Schools are the centers of our communities, and emergency preparedness education helps to keep our neighborhoods safe and New Yorkers across all five boroughs informed and prepared,” **said New York City Public Schools Chief School Operations Officer Kevin Moran**. “New

York City Public Schools is proud to partner with NYC Emergency Management on this critical work. Congratulations to the students at Harbor Middle School in Red Hook who are engaged in environmental justice, community resilience and climate emergency preparedness work, embracing the ethos of this award and leading by example for their peers.”

The Harbor School’s mission strives to develop students’ interests and strengthens to build a more resilient, sustainable, and inclusive community and waterfront. In collaboration with the RETI Center, students built a garden designed to mitigate the urban island heat effect, mitigate flooding, and reduce sewage overflows. The RETI Center and the Harbor Middle School organized community building days to encourage volunteers from the community to get involved in the garden project. The garden was completed during the 2021 – 2022 school year. Students also repurposed a shipping container into an environmental justice field station. These stations served as a meeting place to study hazards Red Hook faces, like extreme heat and flooding. In addition, these stations also served as safe e-bike charging stations, cooling centers, and emergency shelters. Each project that the students worked on included a proposed budget with materials and a proposal on how their project could assist in environmental justice. Harbor Middle School students also presented their projects on “Harbor News” a student-operated news channel, where the students can amplify their voices on topics like coastal hazards and community resilience.

This year marks the 14th anniversary of the Ready New York School of the Year award. During the award presentation, the Harbor Middle School students taught a mini lesson which included a video presentation on the importance of environmental justice for New York City. They discussed how hazards like extreme heat and flooding are exasperated due to climate change.

About Ready Schools and the Ready New York for Kids program

In 2007, NYC Emergency Management and the Department of Education launched the Ready New York for Kids preparedness program by distributing 1.1 million Ready New York for Kids guides to the City’s public-school students along with classroom handouts for teachers. In 2009, the agencies started a pilot program in one Brooklyn school district, holding events at 14 schools and educating over 2,400 students over four months before going citywide by the end of the year. Since then, the Ready New York program has been conducting hundreds of events in schools throughout the five boroughs.

About Ready Girl

Ready Girl is a superhero and emergency manager who teaches kids about emergency preparedness. She is part of the Ready New York for Kids’ program, a joint initiative between NYC Emergency Management and the Department of Education that is dedicated to helping educate young students about the importance of emergency preparedness. Since she burst onto the superhero scene in October 2015, Ready Girl has taken her message all over New York City, visiting hundreds of schools, community centers and youth organizations, and dropping in on local fairs. She has trained thousands of kids throughout the five boroughs, getting every New



York City kid ready for any emergency. Visit NYC.gov/readyny to learn more about the Ready New York program.

HERricane NYC

In NYC Emergency Management's continuing effort to support young students, the agency is accepting applications for the second annual HERricane NYC program. HERricane NYC is a youth development program encouraging young women aged 16-22 to pursue careers and leadership roles in emergency management. The program is free and will take place at NYC Emergency Management headquarters from July 31 - August 4. You can find the application and more information [here](#).

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