

**For Immediate Release**

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**NYC EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT HONORS VOLUNTEERS WHO ASSISTED IN  
THE OCTOBER 2015 BOROUGH PARK BUILDING EXPLOSION  
RESPONSE/RECOVERY EFFORTS**

**January 6, 2016** – New York City Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito hosted a recognition ceremony at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn to honor the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers who assisted the Borough Park community following a building explosion on October 3, 2015. The volunteers represented numerous teams in Brooklyn including Borough Park, Bay Ridge, Park Slope, Midwood and Port Richmond in Staten Island. They provided operational support during the response and recovery phases, and spent weeks assisting at the scene of the building explosion and at the reception center. Their responsibilities included perimeter security, resident escorts, and traffic management.

“We can never overstate the importance of the CERT volunteers who make sacrifices time and again to assist their communities in times of need,” Commissioner Esposito said. “The volunteers used their training to help the Borough Park community recover from this tragic event, and they continue to exemplify what being a New Yorker is all about, selflessly helping family, neighbors, even strangers, when necessary.”

“In the face of the awful tragedy that struck our community on October 3<sup>rd</sup> our first-responders showed courage, urgency, professionalism, and compassion far beyond the call of duty. Thank you to the FDNY, NYPD, OEM, HPD, and DOB for your incredible work,” Council Member Brad Lander said. “This tragic event reminded me that I am grateful to live in a city with such excellent first responders, and to represent a community where people step up with courage and compassion in times of crisis.”

“On behalf of the residents of Borough Park and Brooklynites everywhere, I thank the CERT volunteers that gave their time and energy - as well as their hearts - to assist the community in the aftermath of October's tragic building explosion,” Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams said. “The spirit of One Brooklyn shines through them, and their service stands as a model for all of us to follow in the year ahead.”

During the evening's ceremony, Commissioner Esposito also thanked NYPD for its continued commitment to working with CERT volunteers during emergencies. More than fifty Auxiliary Police were honored and special guests included Sergeant Kenny Garcia from the Auxiliary Police Section and representatives from NYPD Patrol Borough Brooklyn South. Sergeant Garcia presented the police officers with their awards.

“The NYPD and the Auxiliary Police Section are proud partners in the New York City CERT program with a shared commitment to come to the aid of fellow New Yorkers during a crisis and in volunteer service each and every day,” NYPD Deputy Inspector Phylis Byrne said. “More than fifty Auxiliary Police officers responded to assist the police department in the aftermath of the Borough Park building explosion – demonstrating the compassion, dedication, and service that exemplifies the NYPD Auxiliary Police force. A heartfelt thank you and congratulations is extended to these very special NYPD auxiliaries and CERT volunteers for their service to the people of this City.”

The New York City CERT program started in 2003 with 106 volunteers. Today, the City has more than 50 teams and more than 2,000 active volunteers representing all five boroughs. New York City CERT volunteers participate in a 10-week training program in disaster preparedness and basic emergency response skills taught by active and retired members of the Police and Fire Departments. After completing training, CERTs support their local communities by assisting City agencies that prepare for and respond to emergencies.

New York City Emergency Management will host a CERT graduation ceremony at its headquarters on January 27, 2016 for the volunteers who participated in the program’s 25<sup>th</sup> cycle last fall. For more information about the CERT program, or if you are interested in becoming a CERT volunteer, call 311 or visit [www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov).

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**CAPTION:** From left *front*: NYPD Capt. Kenneth Quick, CERT Volunteers NYC Civil Court Judge Devin Cohen, Levi Leifer, Xuhui Davis Kuang, Peter A. Morici, NYC Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito, Shahid Amin, William Vitale, Janet Perry, NYPD Auxiliary Inspector Rose Racougla; *Back*: CERT Volunteers Israel Rosenthal, Saul Perlstein, Pinchas Ringel, Raymond Lukacs, Ronald J. Dillon, NYC Emergency Management Assistant Commissioner of Community Outreach Herman Schaffer.