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**OEM PRESENTS EXCELLENCE IN DEPLOYMENT AND EMERGENCY
RESPONSE AWARD TO FOREST HILLS QUEENS 6 COMMUNITY
EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM**

Holds 22nd Graduation Ceremony for New Community Emergency Response Team Volunteers

June 2, 2014 — OEM First Deputy Commissioner Calvin Drayton today presented the Forest Hills Community Response Team (CERT) with the New York City Office of Emergency Management’s “Excellence in Deployment and Emergency Response Award.” The award recognizes a community emergency response team that has demonstrated a strong history of deploying for planned and unplanned events and excellence in response to emergencies in the past two years. The award was presented during a graduation ceremony for the 22nd cycle of the NYC CERT program. First Deputy Commissioner Drayton was joined by NYC Fire Department Chief of Fire Operations James Esposito, NYPD Deputy Chief Steven Silks, NYPD Deputy Inspector Phylis Byrne, and NYC Chief Service Officer Paula Gavin.

“I am honored both to welcome our new class of CERT graduates and to present the NYC CERT Excellence in Deployment and Emergency Response Award to the Forest Hills team,” OEM First Deputy Commissioner Calvin Drayton said. “Forest Hills CERT is one of OEM’s most active teams with an impressive deployment record and an extensive community outreach portfolio.”

Heidi Chain, CERT Team Chief, Queens Community Board 6 accepted the award on behalf of the team for taking a leading role in helping with the search for Avonte Oquendo. While deployed by OEM, the team worked closely with the 112 Detective Squad, and members distributed pictures of Avonte during morning and evening rush hours at the various subway and LIRR stations in the community. Four other CERT teams were finalists for the award: Brooklyn 15, Bronx 8, Manhattan 11, and Staten Island.

The new CERT Cycle 22 graduates represent Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, and Queens teams. In February, the volunteers began a 10-week training program in disaster preparedness and basic emergency response skills that included lessons in fire safety, search and rescue, first aid and triage. The new CERT graduates will join over 1,800 active CERT volunteers representing more than 50 teams throughout New York City.

Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) in New York City

The New York City CERT program started in 2003 with 106 volunteers. Today, the City has more than 50 CERT teams and more than 1,800 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. CERT volunteers also work to educate their communities about emergency preparedness through OEM’s Ready New York campaign.

The next round of CERT training will begin in June. 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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