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**COMMISSIONER BRUNO HONORS HAITI COMMUNITY EMERGENCY
RESPONSE TEAM INSTRUCTORS AT GRADUATION CEREMONY FOR NEW
CERT VOLUNTEERS**

*11-Member Team Trained More Than 400 Volunteers During Two-Week Deployment to
Haiti*

New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Commissioner Joseph F. Bruno today joined FDNY Commissioner Salvatore J. Cassano, NYPD Deputy Inspector Angelo Maroulis, Assistant Health Commissioner Marisa Raphael, and other City officials to honor a 11-member team of Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) instructors who trained more than 400 Haitian volunteers in basic emergency response skills during a two-week deployment to Port-au-Prince earlier this month. Commissioner Bruno honored the team at a graduation ceremony for 131 new Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers who completed coursework to join a network of more than 1,200 active volunteers assigned to 56 teams across the five boroughs.

“The CERT program empowers citizens to make their communities better prepared to respond to and recover from all types of emergencies, and earlier this month a team of our instructors proved that the CERT program can be successful beyond our borders,” said Commissioner Bruno. “Using the same lessons and core values we teach our CERT volunteers, a small team of New Yorkers was able to train and more importantly provide hope to hundreds of people. I could not be more proud of the way we performed in Haiti.”

"The Community Emergency Response Teams play such an important role in neighborhoods all across New York City," Fire Commissioner Cassano said. "This amazing program gives citizens the tools they need to help others and themselves in any type of emergency. There is no better way to be a good neighbor than to keep the people who live around you safe and prepared. The FDNY is proud to participate in the CERT program."

“Community volunteers can get no better emergency response training than through New York City’s CERT program,” Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly said. “None is better to educate New Yorkers on counterterrorism awareness and traffic management than the NYPD and its partners in OEM and the Fire Department. The public’s ability to function together in the face of disaster has been greatly enhanced with the existence of this important volunteer education.”

“The New York City Health Department has witnessed first-hand the critical role CERT plays in helping city agencies deal with crises,” said Marisa Raphael, an Assistant Commissioner in the agency’s Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response. “During the department’s response communities regarding the importance and availability of H1N1 vaccine.”

The CERT program in Haiti was taught to classes of 40 to 50 people over a 10-day period. The instructors used lessons based on the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) national CERT curriculum. However, some lessons were added to meet the needs of Haiti’s population. For example, one lesson focused on public health issues and drinking-water safety.

The Haitian CERT volunteers live in temporary shelters at the Petionville Club, a former golf course that now houses more than 50,000 people displaced by the 7.0 magnitude earthquake that struck near Port-au-Prince on January 12, 2010. Shortly after the earthquake, the volunteers served with the fire brigade at the settlement and received training in fire suppression.

The CERT concept was first developed in 1985 by the City of Los Angeles Fire Department, which recognized citizens would likely be on their own during the early stages of a disaster. The Los Angeles CERT training proved to be so beneficial that FEMA decided the program should be made available to communities across the United States. In 1994, FEMA and the Los Angeles Fire Department expanded the CERT curriculum. And, in 2003, FEMA’s Citizen Corps Council adopted CERT as a primary way to encourage people to volunteer to make their communities safer, stronger and better prepared to respond to emergencies. There are currently more than 3,500 active CERT programs in the United States.

The concept of developing a CERT program in Haiti came after President William J. Clinton became the United Nations Special Envoy for Haiti in 2009. President Clinton and former FEMA Director James Lee Witt recommended the program to the Haitian government after traveling to the country on series of fact-finding missions. After the earthquake in January, Witt’s firm, James Lee Witt Associates, requested New York City CERT instructors lead the first classes in Haiti. After the first round of training, the curriculum will be evaluated by Haitian officials. The CERT members trained by New York City instructors will then help develop the program in other parts of the country.

CERT in New York City

The New York City CERT program started in 2003 with 106 volunteers. Today, the City has 56 CERT teams and more than 1,200 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 personnel from the Police and Fire Departments. After completing the training, CERT members support their communities by assisting City agencies that prepare for and respond to emergencies. Recently, CERT volunteers served as interpreters at a fire in Chinatown that displaced more than 200 people.

In addition to assisting first responders during emergencies, CERT volunteers play an important role in training exercises and community events. In 2009, CERT members worked alongside emergency personnel at a simulated train derailment in a subway tunnel and participated in Operation Safe Path, a multi-agency exercise to test the City’s and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey’s response to an explosion in a PATH train tunnel. Last year, CERT

volunteers were also deployed to assist with crowd control at a concert at Citi Field, the US Open in Flushing Meadows, and the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. In addition, CERT members regularly work to educate their communities about emergency preparedness through OEM's Ready New York campaign.

The CERT program is a collaborative effort between OEM and the New York City Police, Fire and Health Departments. For more information about the CERT program, or if you are interested in becoming a CERT volunteer, call 311 or visit www.nyc.gov. The next round of CERT training will begin in late February.

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