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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Volunteer Spirit and A New Layer of Security for Manhattan's Upper West Side

New York, NY – Manhattan's famously activist Upper West Side is on its way to becoming even more self sufficient and better prepared. A new Upper West Side Community Emergency Response Team (UWS CERT) composed of trained and certified citizen volunteers, has organized to provide auxiliary support to the emergency response efforts of the New York Police and Fire Departments of Manhattan's Upper West Side and the Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

UWS CERT is a member of New York City CERT, a program of the New York Office of Emergency Management (OEM). The OEM seeks to provide the highest level of emergency preparedness to New Yorkers as they face new challenges to safety and security in the 21st Century, and comprehensive emergency response, hazard planning, and disaster mitigation to New York City.

Sheldon Fine, the chairman of Community Board 7 and the CERT team's founding president says, "I'm really proud of our team. They're capable, committed, and as diverse a group as you'll meet anywhere – just like this wonderful neighborhood of ours. What we need now is funding so we can be properly equipped to serve our community in emergencies."

The volunteer group is looking for a headquarters space on the Upper West Side and funds for emergency equipment, educational materials, a Web site, and general operating costs.

CERT teams are cropping up all over the country as citizens seek to take a more active role in the safety of their communities. UWS CERT was organized in 2006 through the coordinating efforts of Community Board 7 (CB7) and the generosity of the Young Israel of the West Side in providing training facilities. It has 38 members: 32 civilian volunteers and six members attached to NYPD Patrol Borough Manhattan North.

The group graduated its first CERT team this past January, incorporated two months later, and was granted 501 (c) (3) nonprofit status on June 25, 2007.

The geographical boundaries of UWS CERT are the same as those of CB7: West 59 Street (south), the west half of Central Park (east), Cathedral Parkway (north), and the Hudson River (west).

The team maintains a user group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/uwscert/>.