



OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC# 326-2015

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Philip Levine and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: August 13, 2015

SUBJECT: **CITY OF MIAMI BEACH TEEN CERT KICK-OFF**

The purpose of this Letter to Commission (LTC) is to inform the Mayor and Commission that the City has implemented a new program under the Department of Emergency Management which has partnered with the Parks and Recreation Department and the Miami Beach Fire Rescue Department. The Teen CERT Program builds on our existing Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Program involving and educating local high school students in disaster preparedness for hazards that may impact our community. The 24-hr course trains the youth in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations.

30 participants have registered to attend this course, which will take place at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at 2310 Pine Tree Drive. Students will meet each day from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. from Monday, August 17 to Friday, August 21. At the end of the training, each student who successfully completes the course will receive a fully-equipped CERT backpack with essential response gear, and a certificate which presents them as a qualified member of CERT in our community - and nationwide. They also receive community service hours for their participation.

The mission of the Department of Emergency Management is to collaborate, coordinate and unify. With that collaborative effort in mind, this program is a product of the efforts of three departments. The course is taught by members of the Department of Emergency Management staff who are FEMA-certified instructors. City of Miami Beach Fire Rescue and EMS staff will also contribute their expertise by co-facilitating the relevant topics of training. The majority of the participants are students who are part of the Counselor in Training (CIT) Program under the Parks and Recreation Department. These students have worked in our recreation programs all summer long and some will continue to support our after school programs as well. They will now bring this additional training to their positions as CITs. Parks and Recreation Staff are also to be trained during this week-long course.

In 2009 a Citizen Corps national survey found that 29 percent of Americans have not prepared for an emergency because they think that emergency responders will help them, and that over 60 percent expect to rely on emergency responders in the first 72 hours following a disaster. There is strong likelihood that immediately following a disaster, such as a direct hit from a hurricane, the ability for first responders to react to emergency calls will be hampered.

The City of Miami Beach has an established CERT Team with nearly 100 active adult members who are trained to augment emergency response in times of disaster. For the first time, we are extending the opportunity for this valuable training to teenagers in our community. Using the skills learned in the classroom and during exercises, both teen and adult CERT members can assist others in their neighborhood, school or workplace following an event when professional responders are not immediately available to help. CERT members are also encouraged to support emergency response agencies by taking a more active role in emergency preparedness projects in the community.

There has already been very enthusiastic response for this program, and we anticipate offering this course again.

JM/CT/MR/shl