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Alliance for Downtown New York Honors 12 Public Safety Officers

(April 8, 2015) – Twelve Downtown Alliance Public Safety Officers were honored today for their service above and beyond the call of duty and for helping to keep Lower Manhattan one of the safest neighborhoods in the five boroughs. The ceremony was held at Bobby Van’s Grill & Steakhouse on Broad Street. Photos from the event can be downloaded at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/downtownny/sets/72157651430633588/>

“When a crisis strikes, whether a lost child or a storm or a medical emergency, when a wallet or cell phone is lost or when someone simply needs directions – the people in the red coats are there to help,” said Jessica Lappin, President of the Downtown Alliance. “This year’s twelve honorees have served the Lower Manhattan community with honor and professionalism. I’d like to thank all of you – and your entire staff – for everything you do for the residents, workers and tourists in Lower Manhattan.”

In honoring the officers, Robert Douglass, Chairman of the Downtown Alliance, stated, “Your sterling reputation is known all over the city. You really are the backbone of the organization and thank you for everything you do.”

The 60 public safety officers, known for their bright red uniforms, work hand in hand with the New York City Police Department’s Manhattan South Scooter Task Force, which shares the NYPD Downtown Center with the Downtown Alliance’s Public Safety Office. Criminal activity in Lower Manhattan has dropped considerably since the Downtown Alliance and NYPD began working together 13 years ago. The public safety team is also trained to provide Lower Manhattan’s 11.5 million annual tourists with directions, district maps, and recommendations on local attractions.

The Public Safety Officers received recognition from the Downtown Alliance for the following:

Security Officer Desli Darisma – Officer Darisma encountered a distraught elderly male on Wall Street, who was lost and could not speak English. Officer Darisma was able to serve as a translator, and helped the lost individual search for his family. Officer Darisma was able to use information shared with him to contact a relative through social media, who then helped make a connection with the elderly male and his daughter, who was earlier separated from him.

Security Officers Darell Joseph and Devon Wooden – The officers found a wallet at Broadway and Liberty Street, containing \$620 in cash, several credit cards. The officers successfully contacted the owner, an employee at the Federal Reserve Bank, and she was able to retrieve her missing wallet.

Security Officer Stephen Lefkowitz – Officer Lefkowitz assisted a non-English speaking male who had been separated from his tour group. Officer Lefkowitz helped the individual locate his group and determine where and how to reunite them. Officer Lefkowitz escorted the individual to the subway, provided him with detailed instructions to where his tour group was located and paid for his transit fare out of his own pocket. Officer Lefkowitz has patrolled Lower Manhattan for the past 17 years, and greatly enjoys interacting with visitors such as the lost individual he helped.

Security Officer Nathan Turner – After receiving reports of sexual harassment from two women at the Rector Street Station, Officer Turner notified dispatch and 911 and proceeded to conduct an investigation of the situation. As a result of Officer Turner's efforts, police were successful in identifying and arresting the perpetrator.

Supervisor Jason Rivera, Security Officer Steven Maldonado and Security Officer Jonathan Molina – The officers responded to a dispute at Broadway and Vesey Street, where a Salvation Army employee collecting holiday donations reported that a man had attempted to rob him of his collected donations. The officers notified dispatch and 911 and proceeded to investigate. They were able to identify the perpetrator and kept him within view until NYPD officers arrived on the scene to arrest him.

Supervisor Turhan White, Security Officer Ricardo Delgado and Security Officer Richardson Laurent – The officers were approached by a mentally disabled male at Trinity Place and Liberty Street. The individual also claimed to have been separated from family. By noticing an Access-a-Ride card in the individual's possession, the officers were able to notify the transportation service, which assisted in contacting the individual's family.

In addition to the officers recognized for acts of service, **Security Officer Paul Lapera** received the year's special recognition award for his participation in notable academic training sessions. Last Spring, Officer Lapera attended and graduated from the NYPD citizens Police Academy, a 14 week course including instruction of NYPD regulations, the criminal justice system, counterterrorism/NYPD intelligence, special victims, gangs and school safety. Additionally, this past Fall Officer Lapera was selected to attend the FBI Citizens Academy, where he was instructed on counterterrorism, organized crime, gangs and intelligence.

About The Alliance for Downtown New York

The mission of the Alliance for Downtown New York is to provide service, advocacy, research and information to advance Lower Manhattan as a global model of a 21st century Central Business District for businesses, residents and visitors. The Downtown Alliance manages the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Business Improvement District (BID), serving an area roughly from City Hall to the Battery, from the East River to West Street. For more information visit www.downtownny.com

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