



MTA Press Releases

[Select Language](#) | ▼

Press Release

September 25, 2007

[NYC Transit](#)

IMMEDIATE

MTA New York City Transit Awards Medals of Excellence to its Employees

Bus Operator Ralph Fernandez had a first-hand view of the July 18th steam pipe rupture that ripped apart Lexington Avenue near 42nd Street at the heart of the evening rush hour. It was his heroic actions in the moments after that event, however, that placed him alongside 50 fellow MTA New York City Transit workers who were recognized for acts of valor.

New York City Transit today honored 51 of its employees who disregarded their own safety by coming to the aid of fellow employees and customers. The ceremony was held in the auditorium of the U.S. Custom House, where this select group of heroic employees was awarded Medals of Excellence in three distinct categories.

NYC Transit President Howard H. Roberts, Jr. congratulated the employees for their courage and bravery in assisting those in need or in averting potential disasters. "I served in the military for twenty years, so I can fully appreciate acts of bravery like the ones displayed by our employees," said Roberts. "These acts also demonstrate that our foremost priority is the safety and security of our customers," he added.

Four employees were presented with Heroism awards, including Train Service Supervisor Richard Kerimoglu, who risked his life to rescue an intoxicated customer who was on the roadbed and very close to being electrocuted on June 16.

Bus Operator Fernandez was driving an M101 bus in passenger service in midtown Manhattan when a steam pipe exploded a few feet away from his bus. Fernandez not only safely evacuated the customers off the bus, but also stayed on the bus with an elderly customer who was too frightened to leave the bus until the Fire Department personnel arrived.

Bus Operator James White, while off-duty on December 13, 2006, rescued a female motorist who was in the act of being car-jacked. White wrestled and yelled at the assailant, who broke free and fled the scene.

Bus Maintainer Andres Morales tackled an assailant who was in the act of robbing his girlfriend at knife point in front of their home on April 25. Though Morales was seriously injured during the incident, the assailant was quickly apprehended by the police.

Forty-one employees received commendation medals for their individual and collective efforts in 18 incidents. These ranged from helping evacuate bus customers to safety during the July 18th steam pipe explosion in midtown Manhattan to helping extinguish a bus depot fire.

Lastly, but far from being the least, six employees received distinguished service medals for their ability to serve NYC Transit outstandingly and efficiently in the past three years.

Nominations for potential honorees were sent to our Employee Recognition Program Committee, which selected today's honored employees that met their criteria in the above mentioned categories.