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Press Release

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NYC Transit

IMMEDIATE

57 MTA New York City Transit Employees Honored for Exemplary Work, Actions

Workers from Departments of Subways, Buses and SIR Saved Lives, Prevented Crimes

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) today presented 57 New York City Transit workers with commendations for going above the call of duty to aid customers and law enforcement officials, stop criminal activity, contribute to more efficient and safe operation, and in many cases – save lives.

MTA New York City Transit Interim President James L. Ferrara acknowledged the employees during the annual Medals of Excellence ceremony on Friday at the MTA's headquarters, thanking them for their bravery and dedication to their jobs. Medals and commendations are awarded annually to Transit employees for specific acts of bravery, quick thinking in potentially dangerous or fatal situations, and for excellent service in day-to-day operations.

"Today is about employees who go beyond the every day. It's about employees who risked their lives to save others, who bravely prevented crimes, and some who just go out of their way, every day, to brighten the days and the lives of our customers," Ferrara said.

This year's class of honorees included 13 bus operators, five subway station agents, three subway cleaners and two conductors, among others that work at various levels of responsibility within the departments of Subways, Buses and Staten Island Railway.

Five employees were given medals for their heroism in the face of danger and acts that prevented customers or others from being injured. One of them, bus operator Gary Trim, was honored for helping to save two people from an overturned car that crashed in front of Trim's Q54 bus on Thanksgiving Eve 2014. Trim evacuated his customers to allow them to seek safety as the car began to fill up with smoke, then extracted the driver and rescued a car passenger with the help of a courageous customer.

Other acts of heroism and quick thinking include those by bus operators who protected customers from danger such as gang disputes and shootings; bus operators who effectively evacuated customers during bus fires; revenue collection agents that put themselves in harm's way by preventing attacks involving other employees or between customers; and subway workers that rescued customers on tracks. Bus operator Edward Green realized a customer was suffering from a stroke and brought him to a hospital, a life-saving action that moved the customer to write a letter of thanks.

Among the honorees were employees who take the MTA's mantra of "See Something, Say Something" to heart. Biju Kurup, a subway station supervisor, received a commendation for his eagle eyes and quick action to apprehend a recidivist thief posing as a Transit worker. He spotted a man dressed as a subway car cleaner attempting to steal supplies and remembered confronting the man a year earlier for allegedly taking Transit property. He reported the suspicious activity and helped identify the suspect after a police chase. Kurup prevented a crime from being carried out and helped law enforcement apprehend a criminal known to authorities for posing as Transit employees to gain access to staff-only areas.

Another Transit employee that helped law enforcement officials apprehend a long-sought suspect was bus operator James Wilson, who prevented an alleged sexual predator from leaving his bus. Wilson was alerted to a man sexually harassing a customer by a young female customer who recognized the suspect from a previous incident. Wilson refused to allow the man to exit the bus and alerted supervisors, who notified the New York Police Department. Responding officers apprehended the suspect, who was wanted by police in connection with multiple sexual assault investigations.

The awards were presented in three areas:

- Heroism: For employees who perform specific acts of bravery, on or off duty, in the face of extremely dangerous circumstances that could have resulted in personal injury or death;
- Commendations: For job-related acts involving personal risk or requiring exceptional judgment. The employee's decisions and actions indicate that, without quick thinking and corrective measures, highly undesirable and dire consequences could have resulted;
- Distinguished Service: For employees who have demonstrated outstanding efficiency that reflects the highest standards and ideals of a dedicated public employee.

The honorees were:

Heroism (5 awards; 5 recipients)

Richard Singleton	Station agent	Broke up a knife fight over a cell phone
Ralph Johnson	Station agent	Stopped a subway train and rescued a customer on the tracks

Gary Trim	Bus operator	Rescued two people from an overturned car
Timothy Fairless	Bus operator	Stopped an assault on a fellow employee on a bus
James Wilson	Bus operator	Prevented a sexual assault suspect from leaving a bus and aided in the apprehension of the suspect

Commendation (26 awards; 48 recipients)

Chetram Sookwah	Subways electrical helper	Controlled a burst, frozen standpipe valve at a master tower
Trelane Spencer	Subways maintenance supervisor	Crossed four tracks to stop a train and rescue a customer on the tracks
Lance Herbert	Subway conductor	Alerted train crew and police to armed menace
Jonathan Cassell	Subway conductor	Restrained a customer who was attacking others
Carl Peterkin	Subway train operator	Rescued puppy on tracks and reunited it with owner
Gregory Harper David Espana	SIR general mechanics	Rescued customer on tracks after stopping train
Charles Thomas Vanessa Reese	Subway station cleaners	Rescued a conductor under assault by a homeless man
Manzour Chowdhury	Subway station agent	Sought urgent medical assistance for his relieving agent who became unresponsive
Biju Kurup	Subway station supervisor	Aided arrest of recidivist thief posing as Transit employee
Desiree Garcia	Subway station agent	Aided and comforted a teen stabbed in the neck
Jeffrey Booth Jason Samaroo Alfred W. Riley	Subway station structure maintainers	Rescued an intoxicated customer on tracks
Dorothy Rivera Muhammed A. Rahman Thomas Miller	Subway station superintendent Subway station supervisor Subway car cleaner	Located distressed coworker in need of medical attention
Joseph Landro	Subway station structure maintainer	Chased and captured fleeing assault suspect
Aleksandr Guralnik Pak-Wing Wong	Revenue equipment maintainer Revenue collection agent	Restrained an assailant who attempted to wrest a firearm
Luis Salas	Revenue collection agent	Pre-empted an attack on a cleaner
Terry Rosa Jr.	Revenue collection agent	De-escalated altercation between armed man and five teens
Derrick Boyd	Transit property protection agent	Contained a fire on a bus departing a depot

Joseph DiDomenico Lawrence Higgins Jeremiah Hunt Robert Jaskot Robert Riccardi Edwardo Segui	Special inspectors	Apprehended and detained fleeing felons
Steve Goldzman	Buses general superintendent	Extinguished a fire at Flatbush Depot
Tyrone Pinnock Wayne R. Siewname George Venkatasami Peter L. Pieters Varughese Jacob	Bus maintainer Bus line supervisor Bus maintainer Bus maintainer Bus AGS maintainer	Extinguished a fire in an ENY storage area
Anthony Ayoung	Bus operator	Protected customers from a gang dispute
Andy Vazquez Carlton Green	Bus dispatcher Bus operator	Escorted a stranded, disabled customer in a snowstorm
Edward Green	Bus operator	Aided a man suffering a stroke and delivered him to hospital
Allen Caron	Bus operator	Protected 35 customers from gunshots aimed at bus
Kyle Cave	Bus operator	Rescued a stabbing victim on his bus
Samuel Hull Michelle Gonzalez Samuel Martinez Kevin Marks Stanley Mosiello	Bus operators	Evacuated customers during bus fires

Distinguished service (4 awards; 4 recipients)

Paula Smith	Subways director	Service to Department of Subways, New York City Transit and community
Chean Lee	Subways station agent (Lost Property Unit)	Courteous and efficient service to Lost Property Unit and customers
Rocco Locasio	Subway car inspector	Mentor
Leona Jones	Subway station agent	Service to customers and co-workers

Nominations for honorees were sent to the MTA's Employee Recognition Program Committee, which selected employees that met the committee's criteria in the above mentioned categories.