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The New York City Department of Correction

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Contact: Jack Ryan, (718) 546-0921, jack.ryan@doc.nyc.gov
Jeff Jacomowitz (718) 546-0635, Jeff.Jacomowitz@doc.nyc.gov

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Largest Correction Academy Class in Decades Holds Graduation Ceremony at Brooklyn College

Officers Trained in 14-Point Anti-violence Reform Curriculum and Passed Rigorous New Performance Assessments

Brooklyn, N.Y. – Three hundred sixty-three recruit officers took the oath of office today of the New York City Department of Correction (DOC) along with 22 new and recently promoted civilian and uniform members of staff.

This third Correction Academy class to graduate under Commissioner Joseph Ponte is the largest DOC graduating class in decades. The graduates will play a key role in the Commissioner's 14-point anti-violence initiative, which aims to create a culture of safety throughout the Department. Commissioner Ponte spoke at the event.

As part of Commissioner Ponte's comprehensive agenda of meaningful reform, recruit officers benefitted from ongoing improvement in the Academy curriculum. This included greater emphasis on the skills needed to ensure safer jails, scenario-based training to familiarize recruits with common jail-based activities and situations, and additional hours of training on how to work with inmates with mental-health diagnoses.

As a result of reforms already under way, the graduates will benefit from new leadership and supervisors better trained to guide them in their professional development.

"As we strive to become the safest and most respected correctional institution in the country, I could not be more proud and confident knowing these new officers share our common goal of creating an ever-evolving culture of safety at the Department of Correction," Commissioner

Ponte told the graduates in his remarks. “With a demonstrated proficiency in Mental Health First Aid, Basic Crisis Management, and Safe Crisis Management we send these new Correction Officers into the jails as our frontline staff charged with the responsibility of helping bring about meaningful change.”

The unprecedented size of this summer's graduating class and the expected even larger sizes of the upcoming recruit classes are designed to help increase the headcount at DOC and help relieve staff shortages.

The graduating class of 237 men and 126 women comes from a wide range of backgrounds. This diverse class possesses the combined educational expertise of eight master's degrees, 109 bachelor's degrees, and 77 associate's degree. The average age of the class is 30.

The class valedictorian is Bienvenido Lugo. The salutatorian is Kenneth Lopez.

Among the recruits is new Correction Officer Jarlen Hudson. Officer Hudson spent four years in the early 2000s learning leadership skills and rising through the ranks of the DOC “Explorer” youth-mentorship program. Hudson credits the program with providing him with the tools of team-building and discipline, along with a deep sense of pride and integrity, and says it motivated him to become a Correction Officer. (The Explorer program was discontinued some years ago.)

The embodiment of excellence, the newly graduated Officers hail from every corner of the city, with 119 from Brooklyn; 84 from Queens; 45 from the Bronx; 15 from Staten Island; 13 from Manhattan; 34 from Nassau County; 33 from Suffolk County; 14 from Westchester County; four from Rockland County; and two from Orange County.

Forty-three graduates have family members already on the job including one wife, 11 fathers, 10 mothers, six brothers, three sisters, four uncles, three aunts, and five cousins.

About the New York City Department of Correction

The New York City Department of Correction (DOC) manages the jail system for New York City. It operates Rikers Island, which houses 10 individual facilities, four borough-based jails and two hospital wards, as well as court facilities in all five boroughs. In FY 2014, DOC had 77,141 admissions involving 56,218 individuals.

Its Average Daily Population is approximately 11,400, over 80 percent of whom are housed on Rikers Island. Most of the inmates in DOC custody are being detained pending the resolution of charges against them; approximately 15 percent are city-sentenced inmates who are serving sentences of one year or less. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/doc.

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