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MAYOR EMANUEL, FIRE DEPARTMENT CHIEF SANTIAGO GRADUATE 45 NEW PARAMEDICS

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago Fire Department (CFD) Commissioner Jose Santiago today recognized 45 new fire paramedic candidates during a graduation ceremony this evening in Hermann Hall at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

"While stories of heroic medical rescues in Texas are resonating around the country, we are reminded of the selfless paramedics who put themselves at risk every day to keep us safe here in Chicago," said Mayor Emanuel. "Today I'm very proud to initiate the newest class of these fine public servants."

This graduation ceremony recognizes new paramedics who will begin their district assignments with CFD Emergency Medical Services this month. Paramedics are licensed by an accredited institution before joining the Fire Department. Academy training includes training on the handling hazardous materials, Department policies and protocols and coordinating medical services with hospitals, mental health clinicians and dispatchers.

"These men and women have worked very hard and are now ready to serve the residents and visitors to our great city in every neighborhood," said Fire Commissioner Santiago. "This group is diverse and a good representation of the city. We also commend those with military backgrounds who have chosen to continue their commitment to the public with CFD Emergency Medical Services."

Today's graduating class of paramedics include nine Chicago Public School students, 13 military veterans and four Chicago Police and Firefighter Training Academy participants, a two-year collaborative program that trains Chicago high school students in first response.

Last month, Mayor Emanuel announced the City will develop a new, state-of-the-art Public Safety Training Academy in Chicago's West Garfield Park neighborhood as part of the city's continued efforts to provide the best tools, technology and training to first responders. The City plans to build the Academy on 30.4 acres of vacant land located at 4301 W Chicago Ave. The new facility will allow first responders to receive specialized training, to improve collaboration in emergency response, and receive hands-on practice in real-world situations.

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