

NYDailyNews.com
DAILY NEWS

Bloomberg helping vets on job front

JOANNA MOLLOY

Wednesday, July 04, 2012

Three cheers for the red, white and Bloomberg.

Because this Fourth of July, New York City veterans are coming home to hope.

The mayor got it right this time, as he often does when he doesn't slip into micromanaging what we are eating and drinking.

The problem of New York soldiers coming home from fighting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and searching for jobs during the recession is bigger than a Big Gulp, but the mayor has manned up to the task.

He has pledged to place 1,200 veterans in private-sector jobs this year, and this month the mayor will cut the ribbon on a new city Workforce 1 Center just for vets, run by vets, at 60 Madison Ave. It will be the first of its kind in America, and, Mayor Bloomberg said, "We hope (it) will serve as a model for what other cities can do."

This is a complete about-face from how returning Vietnam vets were treated — the men who 40 years later still sit on our streets begging for money with cardboard signs. There are currently 8,000 unemployed veterans in the city, and the mayor aims to help every single one at the center or through the NYC Digital website.

Another smart move: Bloomberg has gotten the Robin Hood Foundation, the outstanding organization that targets poverty in New York City first and foremost — and where his daughter Emma works — to put up \$600,000 to help foot the bill.

Putting vets like former Army Staff Sgt. Anthony Morvillo in charge is key, said Bloomberg's small-business commissioner Rob Walsh: "These folks know what soldiers have been through and what they need."

When Morvillo first came home after his deployment to Afghanistan as an explosive dog handler, Morvillo said he applied to about 50 different jobs over a two-week period and heard nothing.

"I didn't get any answers, but then I received one phone call back," Morvillo recalls. "It was a woman who worked high up in a corporation, and she thanked me for my service, but she said I wasn't going to get a job in business. She said I was going to be pigeonholed. That was a pivotal moment for me."

Morvillo went back to college and got an MBA, and he wants to show employers — and vets themselves — what soldiers can do.

"A lot of service members don't realize, 'these are the skills I have,' and their résumés get thrown in the garbage," mused Morvillo. "And a lot of employers don't understand how the military experience translates."

How does it?

"Officers know how to manage people, how to make sure information goes down the line. But even infantry soldiers have huge responsibility, handling thousands of dollars of sensitive,

expensive equipment, for example,” Morvillo attested. “They have discipline, they place attention to detail, they have time management skills, they understand hierarchy, and they’re used to working in a culturally diverse setting. And they put the organization’s need above themselves.

“The center’s goal is, we’re not just here to say we’ll find you a job, bye,” claims Morvillo. “We understand there are barriers for a soldier, maybe he or she only finished high school, maybe their rent is in arrears, maybe they need training, or have physical or mental health issues. We’re going to use a very holistic approach.”

“It’s our turn,” says Bloomberg, “to stand up for those who stood up for our nation.”

Three cheers.