



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NYC Department of Veterans' Services To Distribute Food, Toys, and
Gingerbread House Kits to Veteran Families at Winter Hero Holiday Event**

*30,000 meals will be packed for needy Veterans, toys, and gingerbread house kits will also be
provided at large-scale event to honor those who served*

New York – The New York City Department of Veterans' Services (DVS) hosted its annual Winter Hero holiday event today, handing out 30,000 meals, as well as dispensing toys and gingerbread house kits to Veterans and their families in need. The event took place from 10 am – 2 pm at the Claremont Neighborhood Center, 489 East 169th Street, in the Bronx.

“No Veteran should go hungry in our city or not be able to provide a happy holiday for their children. With the generous donation of our partners, we are making a dent in the higher rates of food insecurity experienced by those who served while also handing out toys so that they don't feel left out this holiday season. These Veterans served our city, and now it is our turn to serve them,” said **DVS Commissioner James Hendon**.

DVS' partners in the event included Bookwell Travel, which supplied 30,000 meals for the event or 2,500 food bags for families, and 44,000 hand sanitizers, and 44,000 sanitizing wipe packages to weekly DVS food outreach efforts. The United States Marine Corps Toys for Tots provided toys for boys and girls, newborn to 16. NYC Service contributed toys for children through its Secret Snowflake partnership with American Airlines. Bloomberg Philanthropies donated Gingerbread House kits to provide the Veteran families. Claremont Neighborhood Center generously hosted the event.

“We are an online booking platform that puts feeding the hungry first. Coming together for our 5-year mission for not only veterans that are hungry and homeless, but every American that is facing food insecurity and homelessness,” said **Bookwell Founder Brian Gates**. “Bookwell Travel was founded with a mission to fight the hunger crisis in America. Starting with homeless veterans, and active military living in poverty. Once and for all given homelessness and food insecurity the pink slip.”

“Claremont Neighborhood Community Center is not only thankful for the continued partnership, but for the strengthened relationship with the Mayor's Office, the NYC Department of Veterans Service and their partners,” said **Abraham Jones, Executive Director, of Claremont Neighborhood Community Center**.



New York City Veteran Service Organizations including the American Legion, Housing Plus, Samaritan Village, and Worldwide Veterans & Family Services will distribute the food to Veterans throughout the five boroughs.

Veterans who would like to know more about DVS services can call (212) 416-5250 or visit www.nyc.gov/vets.

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About the New York City Department of Veterans' Services

The NYC Department of Veterans' Services' mission is to connect, mobilize, and empower New York City's Veteran community to foster purpose-driven lives for US Military Service Members—past and present—in addition to their caregivers, survivors, and families. We assist NYC Veteran community members on issues that include, but are not limited to: employment, housing, food security, wellbeing, benefits, culture, and targeted advocacy. For more information, visit www.nyc.gov/vets, call (212) 416-5250, email connect@veterans.nyc.gov, or follow us on social media @nycveterans

About Bookwell Travel

BookwellTravel.com puts feeding the hungry first, Bookwell Travel provides travelers the opportunity to experience unique travel destinations while making a difference in the lives of others. For every booking, Bookwell Travel will donate directly to one of over 370 food banks located throughout the United States and provide an estimated 20 meals to the hungry per booking. As an online travel agency, Bookwell Travel and Bookwell Boutique have partnered with Booking.com to bring their massive catalog of hotel destinations together with Bookwell Travel's philanthropic mission.

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