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*** *PRESS RELEASE* ***

Jersey City Partners with NYU to Provide Free Career Coaching to Local Veterans this Summer

JERSEY CITY — Jersey City’s Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Division of Veteran Affairs, and a group of New York University School of Professional Studies (NYU SPS) Executive Coaching Students have partnered to launch a new initiative titled the “Veterans Coaching Project” (VCP), to offer Jersey City veterans free, virtual career coaching services this summer.

The relationship between the Division of Veteran Affairs and NYU was initiated to provide high-quality career coaching sessions specifically designed for Jersey City veterans and their spouses. Ten veterans have been selected to participate in the first cohort starting this month.

“As a deployed Marine Corps veteran, I’m proud to have Jersey City be a part of the launch for this career coaching program, which we hope to expand to help even more veterans in the future,” said **Mayor Fulop**. “It is important that we continue to provide the necessary support and resources as more and more veterans return to civilian life, which includes searching for jobs and starting brand new careers.”

Strategies include goal setting, behavioral strategy development, and accountability to help initiate a self-discovery journey for the veteran. The City of Jersey City recognizes the value of this offering for local veterans and is committed to strengthening this partnership with NYU to ensure this opportunity is accessible to additional members of our veteran population.

Sergeant Major Fenton Reese, USMC, Retired, creator of the “Veterans Coaching Project,” served 30 years in the US Marine Corps, and was a student at NYU Stern School of Business when he was introduced to Executive Coaching. The Sergeant Major sought to create a similar coaching experience as a way to help transitioning veterans settle into their communities. Now working as Deputy Security Manager at Bloomberg LP, Reese continues to serve veterans as head of Bloomberg’s Military Veterans Community.

“I hope that those participating in the program can figure out what direction they want to take, developing skills, creating a plan, and ultimately executing that plan,” said **Sergeant Major Reese**. “The goal is to compete in society, develop confidence, and not be left behind.”

Other sponsors for the new coaching program include HHS Director of Veteran Affairs, Juliet Foster, and NYU Clinical Assistant Professor, Dr. Michael “Woody” Woodward, who is the lead faculty for the NYU Executive Coaching and Organizational Consulting (ECOC) program.

“I am so grateful to the NYU ECOC and Sergeant Major Reese for partnering with us to bring this meaningful service to our Jersey City Veterans,” said **Juliet Foster, Director of Jersey City’s Division of Veteran’s Affairs**. “Our greatest goal is to strengthen and enhance the lives of veterans as they transition back into civilian life, and this program helps move us closer to meeting that goal.”

“What I’ve particularly enjoyed about my experience is the thought-provoking dialogues with my coach and other members of the program,” said **Shara Whitfield, a retired police officer and Army veteran**. She is one of the ten participants in the Veterans Coaching Project. “My coach and I have connected in a way that I feel comfortable enough to share with her my dreams, fears, and determination to accomplish my goals in this second phase of my life.”

Health & Human Services Director Stacey Flanagan is thrilled to add this program to the HHS’s offerings. “Coaching is an incredible way to support those who have served our country,” she said. “This partnership provides an ongoing and supportive feedback loop to increase veterans’ successful transition into their new careers.”

This coaching program is one of the many services the Division of Veteran Affairs provides for its military service members, veterans, and their families. Other programs include their Warrior Wellness Workshop, where veterans and area employers are educated on PTSD awareness and resources. The Division has also helped to facilitate veterans with housing, food insecurities, COVID-19 vaccinations, and more. Earlier this week, Mayor Fulop also joined Hudson County to announce the launch of “Helmets to Hardhats,” a program that directly connects women and minority veterans with career and training opportunities in the construction industry, and assists with job placement.

Veterans interested in participating in a future career coaching cohort are invited to contact the Division of Veteran Affairs via email at jcvets@jcnj.org for an application. Mention “NYU Coaching” in the subject line.

All media inquiries should be directed to Kimberly Scalcione at KScalcione@jcnj.org.