
#GiveThem20 Veterans Awareness Campaign Could Be This Summer's Ice Bucket Challenge

By Joseph Erbentraut | June 18, 2015

Remember almost a year ago when practically every celebrity and well-meaning aunt under the sun was dumping ice-cold water on their heads? With the #IceBucketChallenge a soon-to-be-distant memory, a new “challenge” is starting to make the rounds on social media.

[The #GiveThem20 challenge](#) is a new push aimed not at raising funds but, instead, raising awareness for American veterans and some of the struggles they face, particularly re-entering the workforce when they return from service.

The challenge is simple: It begins with dedicating 20 push-ups or other actions -- organizers encourage participants to “get creative”-- captured on video as a salute to veterans. Participants then challenge two friends to do the same after the video is shared to social media.

The push is backed by [American Corporate Partners](#), a nonprofit founded in 2008 to help returning veterans build their post-military careers. The organization offers a unique online community, called [the ACP AdvisorNet](#), that encourages people to volunteer 20 minutes of their time to offer career advice and serve as mentors to veterans.

The group also hosts a free job board for employers looking to hire veterans and resources for job seekers. It has won the support of corporate and political leaders across the spectrum -- conservative advisor Karl Rove and Democratic strategist David Axelrod [came together last year to back](#) ACP's work.

“Whether you're red or blue or left of center or right of center, it doesn't make a difference,” Sidney Goodfriend, ACP's founder and chairman, told The Huffington Post. “We all should figure out a way to help these guys.”

The need is clear. Though veteran unemployment fell to its lowest level since 2008 earlier this year, many veterans still struggle to find themselves on a new career track as a civilian, particularly job seekers who are female or post-9/11 veterans.

A number of high-profile names have already participated, including television personalities Jimmy Kimmel, Carson Daly and John Oliver, actor Will Arnett, the New York Mets, the Washington Nationals and the Rockettes, who contributed 20 high kicks to the effort before nominating Derek Hough of “Dancing with the Stars” and “Today” host Hoda Kotb.

Another early supporter was Jon Stewart, who Goodfriend had worked with for the past three years on [Stewart's veteran-targeted internship program](#).

When asked who he was most hoping would step up to take part in #GiveThem20, Goodfriend offered up a trio of A-listers: Taylor Swift, Jay Z and President Barack Obama.

Beyond the awareness raised through the videos, the goal is that participants will take their involvement further, donating their time to the cause in a way that lets veterans know their service is genuinely appreciated. Another important element of the #GiveThem20 challenge, Goodfriend said, is that veterans can watch the videos [on one centralized website](#) and witness the acts of solidarity.

That experience, Goodfriend explained, is more important than an organization's bottom line.

“Almost every charity out there is trying to get you to write a check,” Goodfriend said. “But this is the only nonprofit, certainly for veterans, not looking to raise money. We're looking for peoples' time and we try to make it really easy for them to be able to contribute.”