



LISA FERNANDEZ/THE REGISTER

Chef Cody James says a few words before an event at the VFW Boline-Manfredi Post in Des Moines Tuesday. James, a chef who runs a catering business out of his Windsor Heights home, has reached an agreement with the VFW to use the post's kitchen for his business use. There's a twist to the agreement. He'll donate up to 10 percent of his earnings to the VFW for a year. He said his motivation was the "substandard treatment war veterans received from the Walter Reed Medical Center."

Chef to donate portion to veterans

Cody James makes a pact with the VFW to use their kitchen and will return part of his profits to the veterans group.

By FRANK VINLUAN
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

When it comes to supporting the troops, Chef Cody James is putting his money where his mouth is.

Make that your mouth. James, who owns Manhattan Catering, has reached an agreement for his business to lease the kitchen of Veterans

of Foreign Wars Post 9662 at 1309 N.E. 66th Ave. And he pledges to donate up to 10 percent of his proceeds back to the VFW.

"I was thinking of a way to give back," said James, 48, of Windsor Heights. "Quite frankly, the veterans need to be helped out. Instead of complaining about it, do something about it."

James held a kickoff event on Tuesday for the new partnership. He had been looking for kitchens he could use for his catering business. The VFW post on the northeast edge of Des Moines turned out to be the perfect choice. Although

the post rents out its facility for private events, there are many days when the kitchen is not in use.

Dowd Brandt, commander of the post, said that according to the lease agreement, James will give at least one day notice before he needs to use the kitchen. Brandt does not anticipate any scheduling problems and he added that he was glad to help James. But news of the forthcoming donations caught him by surprise.

"If he wants to donate it to us, we'll put it to good use," Brandt said.

In addition to supporting

veterans, the VFW is active in many community causes. Brandt said the post helps the community through contributions to schools and Little League baseball. Veterans also volunteer time to help homeless veterans and those at veterans hospitals.

James said news about veterans motivated him to become involved with the VFW. After learning of the Washington Post stories about the poor conditions outpatient veterans face at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., James said he wanted to find some way to help.

James explained that he

Manhattan Catering

Cody James' catering venture will be based out of the kitchen at Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9662 in northeast Des Moines. James has offered to donate up to 10 percent of his proceeds to the group to support veterans.

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feels a personal connection to veterans because his father fought in the Korean War and his wife's parents both are veterans. He has two nephews stationed overseas.

James eventually concluded that the best way for him to help was through his culinary talents. Now that he has a kitchen, he hopes to host free events for the families of

veterans and for the veterans themselves when they return from Iraq and Afghanistan.

"It doesn't matter if you believe in the war or not, that's not my angle," James said. "Let's take care of the people when they get back. If we can help them, help them."

Reporter Frank Vinluan can be reached at (515) 284-8211 or lvinluan@dmreg.com