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# Team brings smiles to grieving city

BY MARK STAMEY, DAVID SEIFMAN and FRANKIE EDOZIEN

The Yankees' powerful drive into the World Series is just the thing city dwellers need to lift the grief and anxiety that have covered the Big Apple like a shroud since the terror attacks, experts said yesterday.

"We need to be distracted from issues like anthrax and war," said Gilda Carle, a psychology professor at Mercy College.

"We need this desperately, and a win would be delicious. Without a doubt, it would lift us up and pump out our chests."

Doctors pointed to the hundreds of fans who lined up outside the Stadium yesterday for tickets as proof the Yankees would bring back the smiles missing from many New Yorkers.

"We are [now] able to come out of a blanket of grief and fear. Someone is carrying our flag, so to speak," said Benjamin Fialkoff, a Manhattan psychologist.

Bill Grayeski, like many fans, arrived just after midnight and slept on the pavement without a sleeping bag. Nine hours later, when he faced a ticket clerk, he bellowed: "Give me the best tickets you can. Four each game."

After plunking down $1,392, the electronics technician left with a smile on his face and ducats in hand.

"Everything is right," he beamed.

Mike Burke, a carpenter who has been toiling at ground zero, also waited for hours after Monday's game to buy tickets for fellow hard hats.

"We are here to support the Yankees. They are going to win the World Series again. And we're going to rebuild New York again," Burke said.

The terror attacks on Sept. 11, and the subsequent anthrax threat, left many in the Big Apple feeling as if they had no control over their lives, said Alan Hilfer, a psychologist at Maimonides Medical Center in Brooklyn. The Yankees are about to change all that.

"Being able to see ourselves as winners also helps to reaffirm our sense of competence, our sense of familiarity with the position of being in control," he said. "There's no downside to this at all."

Mayor Giuliani agreed.

"It does so much for the civic pride of New York," the mayor said. "But in addition to that, it puts so much focus and attention on New York and gets people to start thinking about other things."

And in what is becoming a common conversation in New York at this time of year, there was already talk yesterday of a championship-celebration parade in the "Canyon of Heroes."

"People have different opinions about that," Hizzoner said. "Some people think it's exactly the right thing to do to show that the city is back. Some people think it isn't. We'll sort of listen to a lot of people and figure it out."

In the meantime, he asked all Yankee fans to show up for a pep rally today at 2 p.m. on the steps of City Hall. Joe Torre and players are expected. City officials warned fans to come early and leave bags and umbrellas at home.

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