

3D printer

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clipped to a lightweight transparency page, the kind found at an office supply store.

"It's not the perfect solution, but it's better than nothing," he said.

Local Facebook users thought so, too. "Almost immediately people started messaging and posting and liking and commenting ... I've been printing non-stop ever since," he said.

Kirsch modified his design to employ more rigid plastic, ordered two more 3D printers to keep pace with demand, and kept working. By April 2, he'd donated 550 face shields and was working on 200 more.

He has personally delivered to police departments, fire departments, doctors' offices, at-risk individuals, post office employees and more.

"It's been two here and five there," he said. "It's not like people are asking for hundreds of thousands."

His biggest donation was 50 face shields to the Benedictine Sisters in Mt. Angel, an order that came just days after his very first delivery of 40 to Bridgeway Recovery Services, in Salem. That initial donation earned Kirsch a public shout-out from Gov. Kate Brown.

"Necessity is the mother of invention, and we need innovative solutions more than ever now," she tweeted. "Kyle Kirsch, of Silverton, Ore., donated 40 masks he 3D printed in just one night."

Although Kirsch has donated out of state, he's essentially running a word-of-mouth operation serving small groups and individuals who might otherwise be overlooked.

For every large hospital experiencing a shortage of personal protective equip-



Three of Kyle Kirsch's 3D printers create plastic headbands for face shields while in Kyle's home in Salem, Oregon, on Friday, April 3, 2020. Each pair of headbands takes about 30 minutes to produce. CONNOR RADNOVICH / STATESMAN JOURNAL



One of Kyle Kirsch's 3D printers creates two plastic headbands for face shields while in Kyle's home in Salem, Oregon, on Friday, April 3, 2020. Each pair of headbands takes about 30 minutes to produce. CONNOR RADNOVICH / STATESMAN JOURNAL

ment, or PPE, there are scores of small doctors' offices and medical clinics facing the same problem.

In fact, many small clinics don't have the buying power to get any equipment at all. Practices like Dr. Tomas Gigena's in downtown Silverton haven't been able to buy from their suppliers for weeks.

For the doctor and his three staff members at True Health DPC, this became an even bigger problem when they landed the opportunity in late March to begin testing patients for COVID-19 antibodies.

Gigena's call for protective supply donations first attracted homemade cloth masks, and then Kirsch stopped by over the weekend with face shields

for everyone in the clinic.

"When people came to me with donations, they gave this beautiful message of hope," Gigena said.

Kirsch has felt equally warmed by the responses he's received. He's given his face shields away for free, something he's glad to be able to do as he continues working for Benchmade Knives and running his personal 3D business, LumenGraph, on the side.

When his face shields first caught on, Kirsch had enough raw material on hand, but when his stock began to dwindle, his sister, Jill Verboort, created a PayPal pool at <https://www.paypal.com/pools/c/8nMG3klwXo>. In six days, donors gave \$4,000.

A grim reminder of the virus' ubiqui-

ty, Verboort herself was beginning to feel sick, and, as she put the PayPal pool together, she awaited the results of a COVID-19 test, which has since come back positive.

Bringing things full circle. Kirsch's face shields are now helping Dr. Gigena investigate a different kind of testing for Coronavirus. Labs across the country are fast-tracking antibody testing, the analyses of patients' blood to learn whether they've already been exposed to COVID-19 and are resistant to it.

On April 1, the FDA authorized the first antibody test for COVID-19, and, as scientists across the globe continue to work in unprecedented collaboration, Gigena is one of a handful of doctors working with Vibrant, a lab in California, to explore whether take-home "finger poke" tests can be as accurate as in-office blood draws.

Thanks to Kirsch, their neighbor down the road, he and his staff now serve patients who think they have – or have had – COVID-19 with added confidence.

Businesses

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Grill and Broads Brew, already had the capability of drive through service; many were running out of options of how to continue to serve customers after the March 23 executive order by Gov. Kate Brown to only serve takeout or close.

But Schuster remembered a regular customer, Ryan Kackley, who owns Oregon Marketing Group, a business in Jefferson that designs websites for businesses like restaurants and produce markets and enlisted his help.

Beyond Santiam Market & Deli, Jefferson Coffee Stop and Jefferson Laundromat, which are owned by Schuster and Kolekar, the service includes Guadalajara Grill, Jefferson Bakehouse, Jefferson Station Café, La Espiga Taqueria and Broads Brew, all of which are independently owned.

"It was her idea and also she helped cover the costs for everyone," Kackley said of Schuster. "She basically wanted to bring the store online and so we took their entire store online, it's like 6,000 items. I think we did them all in five business days."

Schuster said after schools were ordered to close, Santiam Market's business dropped by a quarter; after the March 23 executive order, business dropped about 50% below normal.

Two days after launching the system, Santiam Market had about \$600 in online orders.

A significant challenge Schuster didn't foresee was selling alcohol like beer and wine, goods that make up a large portion of their inventory, by delivery.

Schuster called the OLCC and discovered the agency had relaxed its rules on delivering alcohol.

"They approved it for us in like two minutes," Schuster said.

About a year ago, Kackley built a sim-

ilar online ordering system for Cascade Fruit & Produce of Stayton, and their business has increased substantially since the coronavirus pandemic.

"We had that base in knowledge," Kackley said.

He said he is planning on reaching out to other communities like Stayton, Scio and Salem to see if he can set up similar systems for small businesses in those areas.

For years, a group of a half dozen senior citizens has gathered around a table every morning at Santiam Market & Deli to drink coffee, tell stories and crack

jokes.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the seniors haven't been to the store.

"Really for some of them, it was their only activity of the day," Schuster said.

A week before they started the delivery service, a few of the employees gathered canned goods like soups and other items and delivered them to some of their regular group of seniors.

Now some of the seniors are ordering goods to be delivered.

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Santiam Market and Jefferson Laundromat owners Megan Schuster and Gunaji Kolekar stand in front of their stores. After seeing a need in their community due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they started JeffersonDelivers.com for small businesses in their city to deliver food and supplies.

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