

Local quilters step up to help medical groups

With face masks in short supply, sewers fill the gap with colorful options

By ANNIE FOWLER
SPORTS EDITOR

First it was hand sanitizer and toilet paper. Now, basic medical supplies are in short supply, including face masks, as medical workers try to protect themselves while treating patients who may have COVID-19.

That's where a group of local quilters have stepped in to save the day.

The quilters took over Mama Bear's Quilt Shop in Stanfield on Friday, bringing in material and elastic to make much-needed face masks for Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston, the Echo Fire Department and Pediatric Specialists of Pendleton.

"Jerene (Barndt, from Good Shepherd) called me and asked if I would be willing to make them," said Stanfield resident Mickie Winnett, a retired licensed practical nurse.

Winnett knew there was no way she could mass produce the 400 masks her friend wanted by Monday, so she gathered the troops.

Kristi and Chad Ray, who own Mama Bear's Quilt Shop, opened their space to the group, and there were ladies there Friday cutting material and sewing. The group returned over the weekend and were there again Monday morning.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
Linda Miller, of Hermiston, sews pleats into a mask at Mama Bear's Quilt Shop in Stanfield Monday afternoon. The masks will go to Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston, the Echo Fire Department, and Pediatric Specialists of Pendleton.

The homemade masks don't have the same power as regular medical masks when it comes to protecting from germs, but they can provide some help.

"These are for precautionary purposes, not prevention," Winnett stressed.

Chad Ray got put to work cutting fabric, while his wife was cutting lengths of elastic that hook around the ears to hold the masks in place.

"This little group commands friendship," Winnett said. "If I went down, they would be there to help. This is a massive memory maker."

Most of the material being used has been donated

by area sewers, including Winnett, who recognized scraps of material in the pile that she once used to make herself scrub shirts.

Candace Patrick of Hermiston was happy to help. If there is material to play with, she will be there.

Other generous donors and sewers include Linda Miller, Karen Haugeberg, Shari Humphery and Margie Morgan of Hermiston, Judy Noth, Phyllis Picker and Marla Cox of Stanfield, and Jeanette Goldie of Echo.

The masks must be made of 100% cotton fabric. They are made of two layers of fabric sewn together with the elastic bands. The group

is using an approved pattern it found online.

By 4 p.m. Friday, the group had made 60 masks in three sizes — adult, child, and those for babies. That number did not include packets of material picked up earlier by others. Each packet has materials to make 10 masks.

As of Monday morning, 150 masks had been made and returned. There are 35 additional packets that have been handed out, but have not yet been returned.

By Monday morning, they had delivered 260 masks to Good Shepherd, 25 to the Echo Fire Department, 40 were on their way



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
Jeanette Gold stitches pieces of fabric together to make a mask on Monday afternoon at Mama Bear's Quilt Shop in Stanfield.

atric clinic and 55 were scheduled to be delivered to Guardian Angel Homes.

"This is an ongoing thing until they don't need any more," Winnett said. "It's a major deal. Regency Nursing Home wants 100. We are working on it."

The material for the masks range from polka dots to John Deere to wildlife. There is one made from New York Yankees material, which Winnett said was specially made for orthopedic specialist Dr. Jeremy Anderson.

Once the masks are handed over to the groups in need, they will be properly laundered before being used.



Staff photo by Annie Fowler
An array of colorful masks made by area quilters. The masks will go to Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston, the Echo Fire Department, and Pediatric Specialists of Pendleton.

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