

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Community responds to Hospice of the Chesapeake's call for PPE**

(PASADENA, MD, May 5, 2020) — Like most people, Delia Fishburne didn't quite know what to do with herself in the first two weeks of the state's stay-at-home order. The Severna Park High School junior turned to reading and binge-watching Netflix. That got old very quickly for her, and she knew she needed to add some purpose to her days. That is how Hospice of the Chesapeake teams became the beneficiary of her 3D printing project – ear savers for facemasks.

Inspired by a cousin who was sewing facemasks for her community in Virginia, Delia turned to social media for ideas on what she could do and learned about ear savers, plastic bands with hooks that allow people to remove the elastic bands of surgical masks from behind their ears. Delia found some digital designs online and got to work. She said it takes about 5 hours to make 10 ear savers. She has made more than 460 so far for COVID care nurses, delivery room care teams and trace team members, including an order of 150 for Hospice of the Chesapeake.

The nonprofit hospice and palliative care organization is benefiting from a wave of community can-do-ism reminiscent of World War II war efforts as individuals like Delia as well as organizations and businesses band together to make or donate personal protective equipment, or PPE.

Since Gov. Larry Hogan's first emergency declaration in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the hospice and palliative care nonprofit has received hundreds of N95 and other surgical masks from local businesses and organizations, including UBS Financial Services in Hunt Valley, the Community College of Baltimore County School of Health Professions and Daycon Cleaning and Maintenance Supplies.

It also received 100 face shields: Mr. and Mrs. John M. Suit II purchased 50 from Open Works, a maker space in Baltimore, Maryland, that has rallied its 3D print contributors to create the much in-demand clear plastic shields. Another 50 were donated by Hatch Exhibits in Elkridge, Maryland, which has switched from manufacturing custom displays to making PPE.

And a multitude of groups and individuals have put their sewing skills to use by crafting hundreds of fabric facemasks which have been donated and distributed to the organization's care team. Friends and neighbors have joined together to craft and donate colorful masks in groups with names "Sew Face Masks Maryland" as well as "Mask Miracles," which recently delivered 100 masks and is working on its next batch.

All of these donations assist the nonprofit healthcare organization's response to COVID-19 and its ongoing commitment to the safety and support of its care team members who continue to support patients and families during the pandemic. The need, however, is ongoing, President and CEO Ben Marcantonio said. "We are incredibly grateful for this generous outpouring by our community. The quick response of so many businesses and individuals shows that they understand how urgent and essential it is for our frontline team to be equipped with protective gear, not only for their own safety, but for that of the patients and families we serve," Marcantonio said. "The generosity of our community in support of our mission of caring for life is critical, especially during this pandemic."

Delia can attest that her round the clock production of ear savers has helped to give meaning to these long days and would recommend others her age to join the effort, "I hope they can find something to do to help the cause," she said. "It feels good to give back."

To learn more about Hospice of the Chesapeake's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, visit <https://www.hospicechesapeake.org/covid-19>. To learn more about donating PPE or to the organization's COVID-19 fund, contact the Hospice of the Chesapeake Foundation at 443-837-3385, email us at [foundation@hospicechesapeake.org](mailto:foundation@hospicechesapeake.org) or donate online at <https://www.hospicechesapeake.org/giving/donate-now/>.



Delia Fishburne, a Severna Park High School junior, holds some of the more than 460 ear savers she has created for frontline clinical team members. Hospice of the Chesapeake received 150. Photo by Rebecca Fishburne

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Caring for life throughout the journey with illness and loss is the mission of Hospice of the Chesapeake. For more information, please visit [www.hospicechesapeake.org](http://www.hospicechesapeake.org).