LAMORINDA WEEKLY
Independent, locally owned and operated!
www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Published April 29th, 2020

Lamorinda Chinese Americans mobilized in mask donation

Submitted by Jamiel Liu and Laura Liu

Following the Bay Area beginning to "shelter in place" and the state of California following suit, the Lamorinda Chinese-American community extensively discussed the rapid increase of COVID-19 cases and the shortage of masks in the United States on WeChat, the popular Chinese social media.

Many expressed worries for their elderly neighbors, people working in the essential business and those working in healthcare, all groups who had little to no personal protective equipment (PPE): "We need to do something to help the community, and quickly. The healthcare workers are the frontline fighters against the virus. They need to be protected. We should pitch in and help."

Some families donated N95 and surgical masks, protective suits, gloves, and disinfectant wipes that they had saved to the Occupational Services of Kaiser in the Napa/Solano area. Others pledged to fundraise when further supplies were identified, reached out to their family and friends in China to ask them to send supplies and provide logistic resources, and put a great deal of time into researching federal PPE standards.

The first fundraising efforts began on March 17 when Alice Zhang, a member with a great understanding of PPE standards, secured a purchase of 93 boxes of Medline Surgical Masks (containing 4,650 masks in total). More than $4,400 was raised in three hours by Chinese residents in the Lamorinda area, allowing for the order to be placed. The masks were ultimately distributed among Sutter Health in Oakland, Kaisers in the Napa/Solano area, and Kaiser Diablo within one day. Furthermore, on that same day, a batch of 200 surgical masks and 20 N95 masks were collected from among the group and sent to the East Bay Gastroscopy Center. All medical centers responded with overwhelming joy and gratitude.

In addition, Zhang contacted a Chinese vendor to order regular masks for neighbors and themselves. Ye Liu, the group WeChat admin, reached out to neighbors through social media inviting others to take advantage of the opportunities. On March 26, approximately 20,000 regular masks arrived and were distributed to more than 100 neighborhood families within two days through swift work and help from many volunteers.

Another fundraiser, with a goal of $5,000, was launched on March 27 to supply these same masks for grocery stores, post offices, police and fire departments, senior homes, gas stations, restaurants, and other staff around Lamorinda. According to volunteer accountant Hongyu Wang, by March 29, donations amounted to more than $10,900, used by Zhang to complete the order. In total, 18,000 masks were received and distributed to senior homes, gas stations, grocery stores, and post offices, among others on April 4. In addition to the collective donation, personal donations of N95 masks, KN95 masks, surgical masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes have been delivered by more than 10 volunteers to senior homes, Children's Hospital Oakland, Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, and the UCSF Medical Center, with more on the way.

All those in the Chinese-American community have been ecstatic to see their efforts helping the community. "This has been perfect teamwork," Liu said between tears of joy while discussing the outpouring support from all. "We know everybody in the community is doing their part. We are glad we are all in this together."

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

back

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA