

# the Cedar Valley

View

Edit

Revisions

## Faith Over Fear: Face Shields in the Cedar Valley

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Although the arrival of the novel coronavirus in the Cedar Valley was inevitable, the discovery of the first case still sent shock waves through the community. Within days, offices, restaurants, and schools shutdown as events and gatherings were put to an abrupt halt. The emotion felt within the



Cedar Valley was the same felt throughout the world - fear. For a handful of individuals, however, that fear manifested into something productive - face shields.

Andrew Morse, UNI's assistant to the president board and governmental relations, UNI alum Trevor Carlson, and Chris Hannan conceived a strategy for connecting the Cedar Valley's healthcare workforce with face shield PPE. After consulting with the major healthcare providers along with UNI's Additive Manufacturing Center, the UNI Department of Technology, and about 25 manufacturers in the Cedar Valley, a partnership was born. These partnerships led to the first phase of the project where local hospitals were connected to manufacturers who printed 3D face shields for local healthcare workers. The process helped meet the demand for face shields in the Cedar Valley, but only on a short-term basis.

As the virus ramped up, so did the demand for face shields. The group recognized that a bigger strategy would need to be implemented in order to keep pace with a struggling nation. With this realization, the group entered phase two. UnityPoint ordered materials for 10,000 one-time use face shields to be assembled by volunteers.

The group had their materials and a plan set in place, but they needed a large space and hundreds of volunteers to assemble the masks. This is

where Jerald Sulky Co., owned by Erik and Shelli Lee came into play. Erik and Shelli offered their shipping and receiving floor to build a 10-station work assembly site to produce the 10,000 face shields.



Within a few days, Chris, Trevor, Andrew, and their newly appointed site lead Eric Giddens, a state senator and UNI employee, developed a fully operational assembly site--complete with 10 sanitary work stations. It was there that more than 100 volunteers shined as they assembled the masks.

But the mask assembly was not as smooth a

process as the crew thought. The foam and elastic for the masks were not cut, and the holes on the face shields where the elastic would be tied through had not been drilled. The mask assembly was quickly turning into a DIY project. And with a few prototype assembly videos viewed, the team quickly got under way.

For six straight days, with shifts beginning at 7am and concluding at 8pm, the volunteer workforce not only assembled the shields, but also manufactured the materials in order to make the shields. It was a tremendous effort carried through by an amazing troop of volunteers. And as the operation wrapped up at the end of week two, the team produced the 10,000 shields. Mission accomplished!

While the nation and the Cedar Valley continue to fight coronavirus, there are countless acts of service and individuals coming together in support of others. Hats off to Trevor, his team of #UNITogether, and the hundreds



