

Making masks - Arts clubs pitch in to help out

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The PebbleCreek arts community is banding together during this health crisis to help neighbors and hospitals by sewing face masks. “One of our members is a nurse at Dignity Health and told us about their shortage of masks,” said Ronda Jones, President of the PebbleCreek Quilters Club, “so club members, all who wanted to help, figured this was one small thing we could easily do.” “We heard about the efforts of the Quilters Club,” shared Sylvia Armstrong, Vice President of the PebbleCreek Art Club. “And since many members of our club sew as part of their artistic endeavors, we decided to ask our members to volunteer in the mask making project as well.” Thula Edwards is co-chairing the project for the Art Club. “Thula is a retired nurse,” commented Sylvia, “and has been invaluable on the project.”

The shortage of N95 masks, which are the most effective at filtering out droplets and small particles, has caused many health care workers and even hospitals to start using homemade masks made of cotton. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention even issued guidance on home-made masks saying they can be used while treating patients as "a last resort," and ideally under a plastic face shield similar to what you'd see on a welder. “The masks are fairly easy to make,” noted Ronda. “The problem we’re finding is that there is a huge shortage of elastic to make straps to hold the mask in place, so we’re having to use ribbons or other materials to make straps and that is a bit more difficult.” In addition to donating the completed masks to Dignity Health, the clubs are donating to families and to other hospitals who request them. “We know there are requests for masks all across the country and around the world, but we’re trying to keep it local,” Ronda said.

If you’d like to help, there are several ways, says Sylvia. “We need people who have a

sewing machine and can sew; people who have cotton material, elastic and/or bias tape, or non-fusible interfacing they can donate for the cause; and people who maybe can't sew or don't have a sewing machine but are willing to cut out masks.” For more information on how to help contact Sylvia at sylarmstrong2@gmail.com or Ronda at info@pebblecreekquilters.org.

Source: Sue Wilson, Contributing Writer, Communications Team