

TU alumni find solutions to mask shortages

Remask America provides washable, reusable masks

By ANSLEY KARY



Remasking America, LLC, is a business committed to providing masks and jobs through their partnership with Mar de Urano.

A group of Taylor alumni came together to find a creative solution to the current mask shortages across the world through forming Remask America, LLC.

Amidst the COVID-19 crisis, Remask America's mission is to supply, washable, reusable face coverings through partnering with Mar de Urano, a sustainable swimwear manufacturer based in Costa Rica.

With mounting economic pressures Karen Elizondo, owner of Mar de Urano, had to make cuts to her employees.

Alumni Chad Cazel ('14), Remask America's founder and tech entrepreneur, was the one who originally reached out to Elizondo and suggested the shift from producing swimwear to producing face masks.

During Taylor's spring break, the partnership took off, during which Cazel reached out to other Taylor alumni he knew to ask them to join the project.

This organization consists of 24 volunteers, a great number of which are Taylor-affiliated.

"I'm amazed at the drive and effort from the team," Cazel said in a press release. "It's truly incredible to see the energy and heart behind this project from such brilliant professionals."

Initial funds for the project were raised through a non-profit partner to hire back Elizondo's laid off employees.

Currently, Elizondo's employees use the leftover inventory and fabric scraps from their zero-waste swimwear to produce the reusable masks.

“It just felt wrong to continue making bikinis as the pandemic started to take off,” Elizondo said in a press release. “While no one can solve this single-handedly, everyone can do something. The partnership with Remask America enables me to offer paid work to people who would otherwise go without income during this season, while also responding at-scale to the U.S. mask shortage.”

Almost as quickly as news with the coronavirus changed, so did their project.

The initial goal was to raise 50,000 dollars to produce 50,000 cloth mask coverings.

The initial fundraising totaled around 3,000 dollars through a social media launch on Instagram and Facebook .

However, shortly after, the CDC and President Donald Trump announced the recommended use of face coverings for every civilian and demands skyrocketed.

“I’ve been impacted in many ways,” Operations Coordinator Josh Meredith (14) said. “Primarily, I was able to see God use the gifts and talents of my friends and I to multiply our efforts and do a lot of good for people in the U.S., but also Costa Rican civilians who were going to be without work.”

The project quickly shifted from a small fundraiser into a recognized business.

Remask America reached out to government agencies and larger corporations about the different options in purchasing their masks in larger quantities.

They have sold to companies including Waste Management (1,000 masks) and Kraft-Heinz (100,000 masks).

The week of April 13, Mar de Urano produced around 400,000 masks alone and they are increasing production to 1 million masks per week as of April 20.

In addition to producing face masks, Remask America is connecting health care or other essential workers with sources that can provide N95 masks upon personal request.

Currently, Remask America is continuing to look for corporations and organizations to purchase cloth face coverings in large quantities.

For more information you can visit their website <https://www.remaskamerica.com/>.



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