

NEWS RELEASE

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Working remotely CSUCI pulls together to print 3-D protective face shields

Camarillo, California, April 2, 2020 — [CSU Channel Islands](https://www.csuci.edu) may be operating in a virtual environment right now, but CSUCI faculty, staff and students from several different academic programs have mobilized and fired up 3-D printers to print badly-needed protective face shields.

So far, 51 printers are humming away in University members' garages, kitchens, bedrooms and dens across the region in an effort to help medical personnel protect themselves as they treat patients diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus.

“Otherwise our printers were just going to be sitting and gathering dust,” said Computer Science lab technician Ricky Medrano. “My printer is running in my bedroom 24 hours a day. It’s the white noise I go to bed with.”

The movement began about two weeks ago with Chemistry Lecturer Safa Khan, Ph.D., who worried constantly about her husband, a physician who was working at the Ventura County Medical Center (VCMC) and Santa Paula Hospital.

“I was crying every day,” Khan said. “My husband told me somebody donated a welder’s mask and they were using garbage bags as protective gowns.”

Then it occurred to her that the CSUCI campus had 3-D printers that could perhaps be operated remotely and campus members had their own personal 3-D printers at home.

“I emailed my program chair, my colleagues and asked if they knew anybody with a 3-D printer who would be willing to print face shields,” Khan said. “Within about two hours I had hundreds of responses. It was amazing.”

The volunteers came from several different academic programs including Chemistry, Physics, Environmental Science & Resource Management, Art, and Computer Science to name a few.

“When I first heard we had to stay home and work from home, I was reading the news and saw something about the need for 3-D face shields,” Medrano said. “Initially I was going to do it on my own, but five days later, I heard from Safa that they had a project going and I decided to jump in.”

When Professor of Chemistry Phil Hampton, Ph.D., heard about the project, he alerted the numerous contacts he developed as Director of the VC STEM Network, a web of schools, universities, businesses and others interested in promoting Science Technology Engineering Math (STEM) education.

Hampton learned that a longtime contact of his, DeAnza Academy of Technology and the Arts Technology and Aeronautics teacher Alex Wulff, had just begun a face shield 3-D printing project with a team of STEM students he mentors called STEMbassadors.

CSUCI volunteers joined forces with the STEMbassadors project, printing shields that Wulff and the students deliver to VCMC.

“The connection with CSUCI has been incredibly helpful,” Wulff said. “Because we’re part of the VC STEM network, I could get in touch with Phil (Hampton) and then get in touch with makers throughout the region.”

Khan had procured a \$3,000 grant from Adobe to use for Earth Day, but with Adobe’s enthusiastic permission, she used the grant to purchase plastic for the shields instead.

Other larger plastics companies wanted Khan to pay more than she could afford with the grant, so she was grateful when a smaller Camarillo plastics company, American Plastics Corp., offered to donate plastic at no cost.

“It was another way to give back,” said American Plastics President Robert Washington. “I and my entire staff are doing whatever we can to help. We’re grateful to be a part of the solution.”

Khan was thrilled when CSUCI, the STEMbassadors and all the other volunteers received an email from a VCMC Emergency Room physician.

“Just a quick maiden voyage to report. I used a face shield for an intubation tonight and it was PERFECT. Goggles fit underneath just right. Band has perfect elasticity. Easy to clean. I’m a huge fan...really well designed.”

Hampton is contacting more than 80 other STEM networks across the country to see if they would like to join in the effort.

Wulff said he was impressed with the connections CSUCI had throughout the community, and about the generosity of spirit from CSUCI campus members.

“It’s abundantly clear there are no egos here,” Wulff said. “It is just ‘How do we help?’”

Specifications for face shields are available on an open source file released by Josef Prusa, a 3-D manufacturer in Prague, Czechslovakia: www.prusa3d.com/covid19.

If you can help with this effort, please email: safa.khan@csuci.edu or visit: www.stembassadors.net

Khan has created a website documenting the progress of the face shield project at: www.spark.adobe.com/page/QKsdO1qkE7a3M

If you're unable to print shields but can sew masks or make a donation, contact Amy Towner at amy.towner@ventura.org or visit: www.hcfvc.org.

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