

## **Gladys Adkins of P & D Architectural Precast Fabricating Facemasks**

*Past NCMCA President Gary Joyner recently told us about what Gladys Adkins and friends are doing to aid in the fight against COVID-19. They are making and donating facemasks. Lots of them! NCMCA contacted Gladys to get the story. She tells it in her own words:*

“When I'm not handling paperwork at P & D Architectural Precast, I am a youth bowling coach, bowl in a league and I am secretary for a large league in Greenville. I also am a leader for a 4-H Sewing Club. My plate is almost always full. Or it has been until the bowling lanes closed.

“This project came about when a friend from bowling, Bruce, who works at Vidant Medical Center, sent a message asking if I could and would make a few masks for him. I said give me a day and let me see what I can come up with. After a little research, I picked a pattern and made one. I made adjustments to that pattern to fit it better to myself and to get a quicker finished item.

“Mary Mitchell, another bowling friend, said she could help out. Now Mary knows to never volunteer with me, because I will put her to work. (LOL) Mary came to my little sewing den and learned how to do my pattern (there is no written pattern) and away we went. While I'm at work, Mary cuts fabric and gets it ready to sew. She hunts supplies and brings what she has prepped to me to help, since I'm still working. We both sew each night. She does this Monday through Friday. Over the weekend we get together and sew all day.

“This past Sunday we made 173 masks in one day. It's my goal to surpass that number this weekend. We decided right off the bat that we couldn't charge for these masks. We just couldn't. We say if someone wants to donate they can, but there are several people who requested masks and once I knew their story, I wouldn't allow them to donate. I can't take something from people who have very little. I just can't.

“This is a group effort. Mary Mitchell and myself do all the sewing. Candace Hines has been instrumental in getting elastic supplies to us. People come and cut fabric, hunt for supplies and send money to get more supplies. My husband twists the wire we use for nose adjustments. So many people have helped us. I've been completely amazed by the people who have helped us to help others.

“Mary and I are both 'born 'helpers,' meaning if we know someone who needs help, we generally jump in and do what we can. It takes a village for something like this. I also know of friends who sew that are making masks too. We all chat and help each other out where we can. P&D has been very generous by donating fabric and allowing us to ship masks using their UPS account with P&D Precast covering the cost. Danny Harper, the former President of P&D, gave us a donation to get more supplies. Several friends have sent money to help us pay for more supplies. So many people have done so much to help us to help others; it kind of makes you believe there are still many good people in the world.”

*How many masks?* “We have made around 1000 since we began three weeks ago. We currently have almost 700 more masks to make with more requests coming in every day.”

*Where do the masks go?* “We have sent masks to several states. New York, South Carolina and Virginia, just to name a few. We send them to nurses, hospital staff, people with diminished immune systems, and construction companies. This week we sent them to a masonry contractor that needed them to be on base at Ft. Bragg. Several have gone to the UNC Cancer center in Chapel Hill. We have sent them to the Shalom Project in Winston Salem, a project to help get low-income women on their feet. We have sent some to child care centers too. Walter B. Jones Hospital has requested masks from us and we hope to get those completed this weekend.”

*Where do we get the materials?* “We started using my stash (fabric that sewists purchase for rainy day projects) and when that began to run low, we asked for donations. People very generously responded. They brought us fabric and sent money to buy more. We hunted, mainly for flannel, to make more masks. Sometimes it's like an adult scavenger hunt.”

*Interesting aspects?* “Hmmm...maybe not interesting, but seeing people come together to help others- well, I haven't seen this in a long time. I've been contacted by friends all over who want to send money to help. I was so surprised that people who had so little (some of them were not working) wanting to help out. You always hear it takes a village. In this instance, our village has certainly come together. Not by any means are we the only people making masks. In my hometown of Snow Hill, I know of several ladies who are making masks. I think we are all making them differently but all of us are helping our communities both near and far.

“As you can probably tell by reading, this is something near and dear to my heart. There is something about helping others that is right to me. My parents always helped others and my family continues to do the same. Mary and I are of the same mindset, so we do what we can where we can.” - *Gladys Adkins*

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