

Bancroft Curling Club launches mask-making initiative



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By Nate Smelle

Over the past few months people from communities throughout North Hastings have been finding ways to work together while staying apart to fight the spread of COVID-19. In an effort to achieve this goal, and reduce the potential of transmitting the virus locally Bancroft's curling community has launched a mask-making initiative. The project began when two Bancroft Curling Club members, Lesley Ferrier and Donna Hale, started sewing masks for friends and family. Once the word got out that the two were making masks, Ferrier said more and more requests started coming in. To keep up with the community's demand, she said they reached out to another club member, Lynda Mitchell, to join their sewing team. Explaining how the initiative has become such a success, Ferrier said "We started giving masks to the local food banks to distribute, and a few businesses asked for them. We have provided approx 220 masks, and as businesses are starting to reopen more requests are coming in. The Bancroft Curling Club board of directors felt this was a great opportunity for the curling club to support and give back to the community. An email was sent to members asking for volunteers to cut the mask patterns, sew, and or make a donation to help purchase supplies." Since reaching out to their members for support, Ferrier said the sewing team has continued to grow. Currently, she said there are three individuals cutting materials for the masks and another eight sewing. In the beginning, Ferrier said they were using materials purchased and donated by their fellow club members to make the masks. However, after posting a request for donations of 100 per cent cotton material on the Paudash Lake Facebook page, and reaching out to Vintage on Hastings, she said they received enough support to keep the project going. Indicating that they are currently sewing their way through the fabric they have collected to date, Ferrier

acknowledged that the initiative wouldn't have been possible if it weren't for the generosity of the Bancroft Curling Club members and the people who have donated fabric. While they continue to 'gratefully' accept donations to allow them to purchase more supplies, she said the masks are free for anyone who can use them. Ferrier added that any donations collected that are not used to purchase mask-making supplies will be donated to North Hastings Community Cupboard. As Ontarians move into Phase-1 of the provincial reopening and learn to adapt to the new way of doing business, she sees the Bancroft Curling Club's project becoming even more important to the public's health. 'We keep hearing the two ways to prevent spread is washing hands and wearing a mask,' Ferrier said. 'The challenge with this virus seems to be the incubation period where we may be asymptomatic yet contagious. Our community has been quite protected to date, but as summer arrives the population will increase and possibly the risk. Simply, masks can prevent or lessen spread. Research has shown that wearing a mask protects everyone around you. Following that logic, if everyone wears masks in public we are all protected!' Noting that the masks are available to individuals and businesses, Ferrier said anyone interested in acquiring one can contact the club by email at: bccmasks@gmail.com; or by phone at: 613-339-3113.