



Horizon Science Academy Columbus High School Donates Masks Created by School's 3D Printers to The Salvation Army

Materials left over from school's robotics program used to create reusable masks for frontline workers serving the poor at area food pantries and human trafficking programs

Columbus, OH (April 16, 2020) -- When the Governor ordered the closure of schools throughout the state last month in response to COVID-19 concerns, it signaled the abrupt end to an array of school programs, activities and competitions. For Horizon Science Academy Columbus High School, it meant that the girls robotics team would not be able to compete at the state competition as originally planned. Two of the school's teachers, however, were determined to make good out of a bad situation. Using materials left over from the robotics program, they used the school's 3D printers to design a plastic mask--the type that has become critical and in high demand as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

The new mask was the brainchild of Mustafa Aytekin, an engineering teacher, and Nebi Sevim, educational technology coordinator for the school.

"The teachers came to me indicating that they wanted to do their part to help the community in some way," said Ugur Zengince, principal at Horizon Science Academy Columbus High School. "We determined that we had capacity and resources to create 250-300 masks from the materials that were left over from the robotics program. Since the masks are plastic, they can be thoroughly disinfected and easily reused, which extends their life span and usability."

The school researched area nonprofits that may be experiencing supply shortages during the COVID-19 crisis and identified The Salvation Army. Major Steven Ashcraft, area coordinator for The Salvation Army Central Ohio, was quick to respond to the offer.

"We have been struggling to find masks for our frontline workers who are continuing to serve those in need throughout this crisis," said Ashcraft. "We truly appreciate the offer from Horizon Science Academy to donate these masks."

Among other programs and services, The Salvation Army operates eight food pantries, as well as a human trafficking program. In order to continue serving the community while still following the Governor's social distancing guidelines, the organization's workers are delivering food and other necessary supplies to clients' homes. According to Ashcraft, the donated masks will be given to these workers to help alleviate concerns over exposure to the coronavirus.

"We are so happy to be able to make this contribution to such a worthwhile organization," said Zengince. "I know our girls were disappointed that they were not able to compete in the robotics competition at the state level. Our school has a strong reputation in robotics. But at least they know that their program was still able to accomplish something very important."

The Salvation Army received 100 of the 3D printed masks and the school is continuing to reach out to other area charities to determine who else could benefit from the remaining 150 masks.

Horizon Science Academy Columbus High School, located at 1070 Morse Road in Columbus, is a charter public school managed by Concept Schools that serves grades 9-12. The accredited College Preparatory High School has been recognized as an EXCELLENT school by the Ohio Department of Education and received the National Blue Ribbon School Award in 2012 from the U.S. Department of Education. It was awarded STEM status by AdvancED in February of this year.

Opened in 1999, the school currently serves approximately 500 culturally diverse students, more than 90% of which qualify under the free or reduced lunch program. Despite the financial barriers faced by its students, the schools boasts a 95+% college acceptance rate.

For more information on Horizon Science Academy Columbus High School, visit horizoncolumbus.org.

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To schedule an interview or learn more about everything Horizon Science Academy Columbus is doing during the COVID-19 shutdown, contact:

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