

Dunsford resident seeks help to sew up face mask campaign

Catherine Whitnall

A homemade face mask won't effectively protect against COVID-19, but it can be a useful tool in curbing the virus' spread.

According to Dr. Rosana Salvaterra, medical officer of health for Peterborough Public Health, the proven ways of preventing transmission include staying at home, physical distancing, washing hands, covering coughs and protecting the vulnerable.

However, since the virus is spread via contact with droplets, and masks — homemade or store bought — can cut down on the amount of droplets being transmitted, they can serve as “source protection.”

While these masks are not accepted for health-care workers, they are an option for patients who are leaving hospital and heading home. They can also be helpful for front-line workers who, eventually, must go home themselves.

Recently, the Ross Memorial Hospital Foundation joined the Peterborough Regional Health Centre in a community campaign to boost protection. The PRHC has issued the 1,000 Mask Challenge while the Lindsay hospital invites people to donate via its [Foundation's website](#).

Terese Scheer is hoping to match Peterborough's numbers with her own campaign to make 1,000 cloth masks. She has material and she has received cash donations.

She's just missing a sewer or two.

“The more the merrier, I say,” said the Dunsford resident, who came by the idea courtesy of a friend who is a Ross Memorial nurse.

Initially, Scheer tackled a project to make headbands that would alleviate some of the tension, and resulting pain, the N95 masks put on the wearer's ears. In short time, Scheer and a small crew of sewers whipped out 300 of them. She's hoping to make more for staff at long-term care homes and, at the same time, make 1,000 masks that can be used for patients at the Lindsay hospital.

“I have the material. I just need the manpower and the machines,” said Scheer, who has received donations from the Dunsford Lions Club and the Kinsmen Club and assistance from Victoria's Quilts.

Scheer said help is coming from all corners of the City of Kawartha Lakes.

“I had a woman from Coboconk call me out of the blue,” she said. “Everyone's just jumped on board. It's pretty neat when you live in a community that really reaches out.”

Scheer has a link to share with those interested in helping out and health units are directing the public to <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.

Anyone wishing to help Scheer is asked to call [705-928-9611](tel:705-928-9611) or [705-793-3574](tel:705-793-3574).

The Ross Memorial is also continuing to accept donations of unopened/unused surgical masks, N95 respirator masks, gloves, and waterproof gowns to support front-line workers. Please contact Marc Sorensen at msorensen@rmh.org or [705-324-6111](tel:705-324-6111) ext. 8952 to arrange donation during regular business hours.