

Project Story: Washable Cloth Face Masks

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Sometime in late February, in conversation with my sister, we decided that cloth face masks would be a very good idea. My original goal was to make them for family and family friends, as well as health care workers who were already starting to panic about the possible shortage of medical n95 masks. Between the two of us we researched different materials both for coverings and filters and designs for best fit.

At this time, despite the mixed messaging from the province, and only with the encouragement from my sister, I made and distributed 155 masks from a stash of hoarded fabric, thread, some galvanized steel strapping, Teflon plumbers wrap, and elastic (in large part donated by our local pharmacy).

Requests for cloth re-usable masks continued and I was able to source fabric from the community to continue being able to provide these masks with minimal costs (additional strapping, filter material being the main 'new material' need.)

I received a call from someone suggesting I apply for a grant to cover hard costs. This provided a breathing space for me to order more elastic and filter material, and also the additional community encouragement to continue making masks despite the general pandemic surreal emotional conditions and the continued mixed messaging from the province.

I am also happy to be able to offer these free of charge as I believe they are necessary for the public good and feel it is very important to combat crisis capitalism. This effort does not even come close to what I feel I owe my community.