

Private Businesses Band Together to Support Community Needs in Northern Colorado

This spring, The Neenan Company teamed up with Liberty Common High School (LCHS) to help address the shortage of medical equipment created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Using LCHS' 3D printing studio, volunteers from both

organizations have created more than 800 face shields and 600 ear guards to support increased demand for personal protective equipment (PPE) at frontline healthcare facilities.

With strong connections to several organizations in the healthcare industry through its design-build work, The Neenan Company helped facilitate the distribution of face shields and ear guards to several hospitals and clinics throughout the country. LCHS and The Neenan Company were also compelled to look at needs locally to support the northern Colorado community.

While acute facilities are most critically in need of these medical supplies due to their direct care of COVID-19 patients, non-acute facilities still need supplies to protect patients and employees from the spread of COVID-19. One such facility located in Fort Collins is Pathways, a nonprofit organization that provides hospice and palliative care, grief

and loss counseling services, as well as symptom management and support for long-term illness. As of mid-May, Pathways was caring for about a dozen people with COVID-19 symptoms. While the demand for commercial-grade PPE in acute care facilities outpaces supply, the ingenuity and resourcefulness behind the donated supplies provided particular value to non-acute facilities, like Pathways, in protecting staff and patients.

"Under normal conditions, we go about a more mainstream way to secure PPE for our staff, however, the conditions presented by COVID-19 make Neenan and Liberty Common's manufacturing of these face shields and ear guards so useful and needed, especially for non-acute facilities like Pathways," said Evan Hyatt, director of marketing and communications for Pathways.

"Pathways is subject to different levels of regulation and restriction than acute facilities – like hospitals – would be, but nonetheless we are still caring for people suffering from COVID-19 and need to protect our staff, patients and their families. This donation goes a long way for our team to provide a high standard of care while also reducing the risk of contagion."

Other local recipients of supplies donated by this partnership include Medical Center of the Rockies, Associates in Family Medicine, and Colorado Heart and Vascular.

The entrepreneurial effort put forth to create these in-demand supplies and donate them to those in need was made possible by a strong community partnership led by LCHS and The Neenan Company.

"We hope to continue supporting healthcare providers locally and around the country as the supply for medical equipment continues to be strained," said Zach Adams, a Neenan Company project engineer and leader behind the project.

Materials for the endeavor are donated by The Neenan Company. The project is also funded by the LCHS Key Club and community contributions. The medical shields are a Swedish design approved for surgical use by the National Institute of Health.

Those interested in donating to the project, volunteering, or requesting shields for medical use can email The Neenan Company at faceshields@neenan.com for more information.

