

A Message from First Lady Teresa Little

Using our own intellect and imagination to inspire during COVID-19

"Gratitude Changes Everything"

April 27, 2020

This is a time of trial, tribulation and uncertainty; no doubt about it.

We have come to fully realize the severity the coronavirus and the impact of its shock wave on our health, families, Idaho, the United States of America and our world.

The rhythm and certainty of our lives has changed.

During this time, when someone we love dies, we are not able to grieve and celebrate their lives with family and friends. We are unable to share the joyful celebrations of marriages, birthdays and graduations. Jobs have vanished, businesses are closing, and many may not reopen. Years of economic progress have disappeared. There are hungry children. There are frightened individuals.



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thoughts or
suggestions!

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However... hope, faith, strength, gratitude and love are found in abundance.

Individuals, institutions and companies are working tirelessly to figure out our best path forward: to understand COVID-19 and to develop tests, treatments and a vaccine for it. They are doing the same on the economic and social services fronts. All best practices and creative solutions are being explored.

Our own intellect and imagination are part of the solution. Please do not hesitate to put your helpful idea forward.

Let me share some stories of inspiration I have come across in recent weeks.

A friend, Becky Larson, reached out a little over a month ago. Her friend, Randy Dolittle, has worked for Reyco Systems of Caldwell for years. The ultraviolet-C decontamination they use in the food industry has application in the health industry. Some Reyco employees are now working with great dedication on equipment specifically for hospitals.

Marilyn Tripple emailed me with a contact for PPE.

The facemask makers have been at task well before the CDC changed their guidelines. We applaud their foresight, their skill and their heart.

I have been in email and phone contact with quite a few and want to share some of our conversation and their photos with you.

In conversation with Laurie Boston, Gem County's Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, I learned her associate, Elbia Christensen, organized the Gem County volunteers for COVID-19. First responders, essential businesses and community members have received over 200 face coverings to date. Email Elbia at echristensen@co.gem.id.us if you would like to help or receive instructions.

If you go to see a medical professional at the Valor Health clinic in Emmett without a mask they will give you a cloth mask to wear during your visit and to keep if you don't have one.

In early March, Jeanne Helmich Combest could see the need for masks was looming. Her daughter found a link with a pattern and video at that time. A 90-year-old quilter friend donated a lot of fabric to Jeanne. Her first 19 masks went to her niece who is a nurse. The second 15 went to an assisted living facility. Family, close friends, military families and cancer patients have been given masks. She has made 80 masks to date.

Terri Curry, President of the Boise Basin Quilters, a group with 400 members throughout the Treasure Valley reports they began sewing masks the middle of March to fill a need at the VA Hospital (500 masks). They have currently supplied over 4,000 masks to hospitals, nursing homes, hospice workers, surgical

"Our gratitude for healthcare workers, first responders, workers who keep our supply chains moving, leadership in government, government security and safety nets, and those who work at our stores, businesses, in industry, in education, and on farms and ranches is deep and abiding."

centers and police officers. A member who lives in McCall is filling the need there. The quilters donated four bags of fabric to the Idaho Department of Correction for the mask sewing they have begun. Terri has personally made 683 masks!

Anita Allex aka "Rosie The Mask-inator" is the descendant of Revolutionary War Patriots. She is the spouse and mother of former Army and police officers. She fully appreciates the need to protect the health of men and women who serve us daily. She has helped coordinate the efforts of women within her church and her chapter of the DAR. Anita has sewn over 500 masks and prepared over 200 kits to distribute to people without the needed supplies but the desire to help. The VA Medical Center, St. Al's Hospital, family and friends have been the beneficiaries. Her DAR Eagle chapter, church friends and others total is 2700 to date.

Linda Gerber has also been working to fill the need with masks and mask kits. She has focused her efforts toward seniors, caregivers and others with special needs. Her nieces who are nurses in other parts of the country have benefited with mask covers to protect their rationed PPE. She has made 154 masks plus kits for another 65.

Pam Goza's heart was moved to begin her mask making efforts after seeing a news report on ladies in the southeastern part of our country sewing them. She connected with friends in our area and has been working tirelessly since that time.

Susan Caswell counts herself as one of many who have stepped in to fill this need. She is grateful for the incredible numbers of individuals participating throughout the State. Susan and Elbia were the first to enhance my education on the subject of facemasks.

My friend, Nancy Evans, generously asked how she could help. She "got us covered" in the Governor's Office by making masks for staff and their families. The quilting groups she belongs to continue their good work.

My daughter-in-law Angela's Mom, Patty Streebel, is engaged. The facemasks which are worn by our sons and daughters-in-law as they venture out on trips to the grocery store are of her creation. I am very grateful.

Friend, Laurey Thomson, sewed for her family. Ida, her granddaughter, put in a special request for her "Nana" to keep her friends safe too.

The contributions of time and talent by these and the multitude of other mask makers across our state are being met with much gratitude.

Their emails and texts assure me their work is a blessing for both the giver and the receiver.

We are living much closer to the edge of our understanding and emotional capacity right now.

Take advantage of every opportunity to share love with your family and friends; be it by phone call, letter, email, text or video chat.

Give yourself permission to ask for the help you might need through prayer, reaching out to family and friends, or social services.

Uncertainty should not be a reason for inaction. Ask yourself what you might do that is meaningful, helpful and productive and then do it.

Accomplishing a concrete task helps us feel in control; even at a time when many things remain out of our control.

Gratitude, love, strength, faith, hope and patience to you ... and to all.

Teresa Little

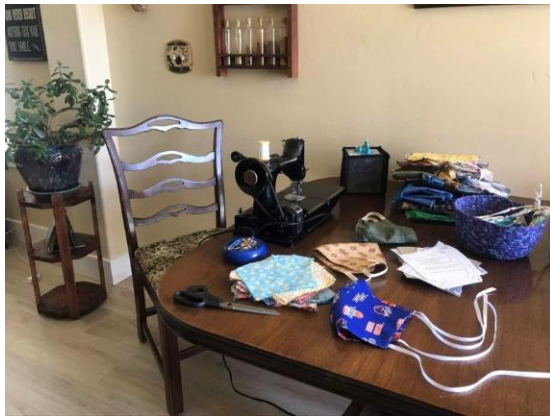
Teresa

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P.S. - Another example of the kindnesses happening in our world: Dave Beck, who owns HeBrews coffee in our hometown of Emmett, has been delivering his delicious gelato to our community's first responders. It touched my heart when he delivered some to us as I was writing this letter.....Coffee Mocha and Oh Ya Lemon.....extraordinary.



Gem County volunteers with finished handmade facemasks ready to distribute in our community. Photo courtesy of Del Gray.



Jeanne Combest's work station!



Terri Curry with 140 handmade face masks to deliver.



Some of Anita Allex's (aka "Rosie The Mask-inator") handiwork.



Laurey Thomson had a special assignment from her granddaughter, Ida -- facemasks for all of Ida's friends (stuffed animals) to keep them safe, too!



Some of Pam Goza's beautiful work.



Our front window at home.