

TEAM CORONA BUSTERS

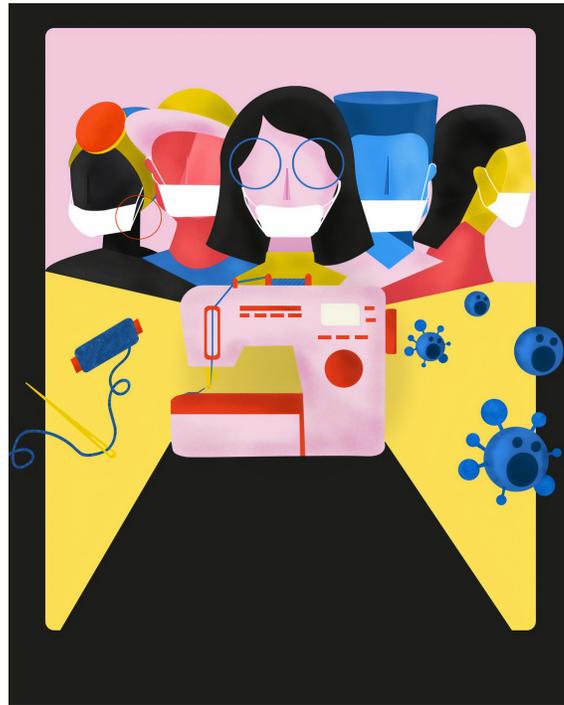


IMAGE COURTESY OF UNITED NATIONS COVID-19 RESPONSE VIA UNSPLASH

GLOBAL TEAM
CORONA
BUSTERS .

Focuses on its mission while relying on a growing network of members and donors



STOPPING THE SPREAD, ONE MASK AT A TIME

By Stephanie Dufner, Freelance Writer

Every new year bursts with a sense of optimism. Although 2021 has presented some initial challenges politically, many believe this year will be a vast improvement over the last due to advances in producing and distributing vaccines for COVID-19.

Coronavirus facilitated the launch of Global Team Corona Busters (also known as Team Corona Busters) under the leadership of Founding Members **Sheri Cecil, Eleanor Bakewell, Wendy Trimiti, and Paul Rycus**, Ventura County residents and advocates for the group's sole mission — saving lives.

Global Team Corona Busters has distributed more than 18,000 masks around the world since its launch last March, according to Cecil. To do this, the group depends on a core of tireless and dedicated volunteers throughout the local community who support the organization with sewing and logistical talents for the cause.

Mask recipients include front line workers and individuals most vulnerable to the disease, specifically at-risk groups within the general population.

“Those who have received masks include nurses and doctors throughout the U.S. as well as the Navajo Nation, veterans’ homes nationwide, nunneries, and refugees seeking asylum in the camps in Mexico,” Cecil confirms.

Last year, Global Team Corona Busters also made themed masks during key holidays, including the Fourth of July, Halloween, Christmas, and Hanukkah. “Many went to Make-a-Wish families and cancer centers throughout the Southland so recipients could have something special to wear,” says Cecil.

Help always wanted

Volunteers, individual donors, and businesses - local and national, play pivotal roles in Global Team Corona Busters’ efforts. In addition to some cash donations from individual donors, the group continues to receive fabric, thread, and both partially completed and finished masks almost daily.

Last October, Global Team Corona Busters received a generous donation of 1,000 masks from **Naturally Nestled** and gave them to **Border Kindness** to provide face masks to asylum seekers near the US/Mexico border. Local merchants including Ventura-based **Superbuzzy**, a fabric and craft-supply shop, also gather donations for Global Team Corona Busters’ activities.

“Kelly, the store’s owner, is kind enough to drop them off to me directly. It’s a lot of organization to get the supplies in the seamstresses’ hands so we can move fast,” admits Cecil.

Global Team Corona Busters regularly seeks support to curb the spread of COVID-19. “We are always looking for partners to assist us by using their philanthropic measures, be it cash donations, which pay for shipping expenses, material purchases, and office/technology expenses; volunteerism that involves people cutting fabric, sewing materials, transporting masks, etc.; and awareness for spreading the word of what we have done and still need to do in our efforts to save lives,” Rycus says.

Their Facebook group, www.facebook.com/groups/GlobalTeamCoronaBusters, contains an ever-expanding network of 1,250-plus volunteers located in 25 countries.



Gratitude and Blessings

Global Team Corona Busters has received a multitude of “gratitude and blessings” for its ongoing achievements throughout the pandemic. Such “tokens of gratitude” from local mask beneficiaries which have appeared on Cecil’s doorstep have included homemade treats, fresh fruits and vegetables, crafts, and other miscellaneous gifts.

The group also garners verbal praise from individuals who attain masks from them.

“We are pleased to receive positive feedback from each of our mask recipients and local community members,” Rycus confirms. “It is a delight to receive photos of our recipients donning our homemade face masks, and we frequently post them on our social media platforms. As one might expect, we do receive a few negative comments from anti-maskers, but those are few and far between.”

Mission: Ongoing

One of the nation’s leading public health experts, **Anthony Fauci, M.D.**, believes the U.S. could have a relative return to “normalcy” by late this year. However, this is dependent on more than 75% of Americans receiving the COVID vaccine.

“If we do that, if we do it efficiently enough over the second quarter of 2021, by the time we get to the end of the summer, i.e., the third quarter, we may actually have enough herd immunity protecting our society that as we get to the end of 2021, we can approach very much some degree of normality that is close to where we were before,” Fauci says in a recent [online interview](#).

Nevertheless, Cecil believes mask wearing will be part of the collective new normal. “People will need to wear masks for years to come. We will make and continue to provide free masks to those in need.”

Rycus agrees with Cecil’s assessment citing a report from another medical authority.

“Unfortunately, Sheri is correct. Recently on the Today show, **John Torres, M.D.**, the NBC News Senior Medical Correspondent, said that it is likely we will be [wearing face masks on and off for the rest of our lifetimes](#).”

Aside from espousing mask wearing and spreading its mission in the coming year, Global Team Corona Busters hopes to eventually attain a nonprofit designation of 501(c)3. Currently, finances hinder this goal. “We simply do not have funds to pay for the administrative fees associated with the filing,” Rycus proclaims.

Those who want to contribute to Global Team Corona Busters can make donation [via the organization’s website](#) or [register as a volunteer](#).

