



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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MEDIA RELEASE

From: Michael Terry
Deputy PIO, 352-238-4801

Re: HCSO Detention Center Participates in Million Mask Challenge to Aid Local Medical Personnel

Date: March 26, 2020

Inmates at the Hernando County Detention Center are being put to work to combat a shortage of face masks at area hospitals.

Personnel at the detention center first became aware of the face mask shortage on March 20.

Lt. Teresa Stevens immediately began researching the face mask shortage and devised a plan utilizing inmates to make face masks for use by local medical personnel.

Upon receiving permission from the Jail Administrator, Major Shaun Klucznik, Lt. Stevens proceeded to implement the project.

On March 23, four female inmates were selected to participate in the face mask project, along with Deputy Stacey Gooding, Deputy Krystal DeJesus, and Lt. Stevens.

Four sewing machines and numerous supplies were donated to the detention center to make the face masks.

Lt. Stevens first order of business was to conduct a basic sewing class for all participants. By the end of Monday, the inmates had learned to iron, measure, and cut fabric to make the masks.

By the end of the day on March 25, the four inmates had completed 131 face masks.

The first batch of face masks were donated on March 26 to Bayfront Health Brooksville. Additional donations will be made to other area hospitals in the coming days.

Lt. Stevens also made contact with administrators of the Million Mask Challenge, a

nationwide effort to combat the face mask shortage for medical personnel. The hope is the group can help coordinate community needs and develop additional resources for face mask production.

Lt. Stevens said this project has allowed the female inmates an opportunity to interact in a positive setting with other female inmates, while learning a new skill and building self-esteem.

“To see the inmates smile as they developed extreme pride and ownership of the project from a deputy’s prospective while giving back to the community is a great gift,” she said.

The Office of Sheriff:

The Office of the Sheriff is established by the Florida Constitution. As a constitutional officer, the Sheriff has the exclusive authority to administer his or her agency and is responsible for preserving the peace throughout the entire county, carrying out the laws of the state, the orders of Florida courts, and the ordinances of the Board of County Commissioners. The Sheriff is the chief law enforcement and correctional officer of the county.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis was initially appointed as the Sheriff of Hernando County by the Governor in January of 2011. He was then elected by the people of Hernando County in 2012, ran unopposed in 2016, and remains accountable to them.