



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 7, 2020

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**OTTAWA AREA ISD DONATES PPE SUPPLIES TO COUNTY
FOR DISTRIBUTION TO FRONTLINE RESPONDERS**

Holland, MI- The Ottawa Area ISD is working with the Ottawa County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to help meet the personal protection equipment (PPE) needs of frontline responders in the Ottawa area during the COVID-19 crisis. This is just one of many positive outcomes that have occurred from a history of collaboration between education agencies, Ottawa County, and first responder agencies.

Careerline Tech Center, a service of Ottawa Area ISD, operates educational programs that provide real-world experiences and training for high school juniors and seniors in a variety of career fields including medical and public safety and security. These classes use the same personal protection equipment in their classroom learning activities that area first responders and hospitals need to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dave Searles, Director of Career and Technical Education for OAISD, said many of his instructors approached him about donating their unused PPE supplies as soon as Governor Whitmer issued the order on March 13 to temporarily close schools.

“We inventoried our coveralls, medical gloves, surgical masks, N95 masks, and sanitary wipes, When we finished we had a nice stockpile of items to donate,” Searles said. “We want to do whatever we can to help the people who are on the front lines risking their lives as they care for our community members and attempt to help stop the spread of this virus.”

Activated in early March, the Ottawa County Emergency Operations Center brought together liaisons from multiple sectors including hospitals, fire departments, emergency medical services, law enforcement, community volunteers, K-12 education, higher education, and others to support the Ottawa County Department of Public Health’s response to the pandemic. The EOC became the connection point between the Careerline Tech Center stockpile of PPE and its distribution to frontline responders.

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“We are proud to work with the EOC to ensure the right materials are going to those who need them the most,” Michael Rohwer, EOC K-12 education liaison and assistant superintendent for OAISD, said. “Rather than donating to a single agency, this coordinated effort helped bridge the gap between current needs and future supply lines and maximizes the impact across the community of first responders.”

Ottawa Area ISD provided an inventory of available supplies to the EOC, which was then able to match them with area needs. Volunteers coordinated through the EOC picked up the supplies from Careerline Tech Center and distributed to area frontline responders.

“These donations came at a critical time when supply lines from the state and federal government were still forming and our frontline employees had a high need for PPE,” said Ottawa County Director of Emergency Manager Nick Bonstell. “Collaborative efforts like these demonstrate the strength of the EOC as a way to bring community groups with a common mission together.”

These efforts are ongoing as Executive Order 2020-35 allows and encourages all schools to consider donating materials to area responders. The process developed between Ottawa Area ISD and the EOC is expanding to include donations from any K-12 entity able to donate materials.

“Providing necessary PPE to those who need them the most has been an “all hands on deck” effort so far,” Bonstell said. “We ask anyone with personal protection equipment and materials at home to please consider donating your items to help our keep our frontline responders safe.”

The Ottawa County Emergency Operations Center is requesting donations for the following items for First Responders:

- N95 or KN 95 Masks
- Surgical Masks
- Gowns (all sizes)
- Face Shields
- Hand Sanitizer
- 2 Oz or 4Oz plastic bottles to fill Hand Sanitizer

Donations can be made by contacting the Ottawa County Emergency Operations Center at OCEM@miottawa.org or 616-738-4050. The drop-off location is 12130 Fillmore St, West Olive, MI (Fillmore Complex Storage Building), but please call ahead.

Ottawa County Department of Public Health

The Ottawa County Department of Public Health works with the community to help assure conditions that promote and protect health. The department is dedicated to preventing diseases and providing evidence-based public health programs and services. www.miottawa.org/health/ochd/

Ottawa Area Intermediate School District

Ottawa Area Intermediate School District works collaboratively with schools and communities to meet the educational needs of students of all ages in the Ottawa area. By pooling resources and providing services regionally, Ottawa Area ISD provides important programs and services to local K-12 school districts, charter, parochial and private schools and adults in the most cost-effective ways possible. To learn more about Ottawa Area ISD visit www.oaisd.org