27th April, 2020

3D PROJECT HELPING TO PROTECT FRONTLINE WORKERS

Over 300 protective face shields have been assembled and distributed to frontline staff in just the first week of a new project located at Greenhill School, the West Wales hub of 3DCrowd.

The 3D Project has seen the school join forces with volunteer 3D printer owners from across West Wales and the local community to produce the face shields.

Already, 150 face shields have been delivered to Pembroke District Nurses, 10 to South Pembs Hospital, 50 to Prince Philip Hospital in Llanelli, 20 to Solva Surgery, and 95 to care homes across Carmarthenshire.

Vicki Price, Greenhill's Head of IT and Computing, said their involvement came about because of the school's award-winning Techno Club, which was due to compete in the UK finals of the FIRST® Tech Challenge UK tournament in March.

"Unfortunately the finals had to be cancelled, but the club's mentor had other ideas on how to keep them occupied," said Vicki, a former pupil of Greenhill School herself.

Their mentor, ex-engineer turned amateur robot-maker Ian Beaver, is a member of 3DCrowd UK - a network of 6,000+ volunteer 3D printer owners producing face shields for Covid-19 workers.

"I had a message from him asking me if I was bored," said Vicki. "I should have known something was up!"

3DCrowd enlists the help of local 3D printers from all over the UK to create frames for face shields (all to the same specification) and Ian coordinates those in West Wales and gets their frames to Greenhill while Vicki organises the production line and distribution at the school.

Observing strict hygiene controls and social distancing, the volunteers (made up of school staff) assemble the 3D frames with a visor and elastic, and flat-pack them into a bag ready for distribution, including labels and instructions. The packaged face shields are delivered directly by volunteers to the frontline workers who have requested them through the 3D Crowd website.

"The way people have come together and used their skills to help others has been awesome," said Vicki. "People have been printing, donating elastic, making button holes, coming into school to put everything together; the list just goes on and on. We've got so many people making such a difference."

She added that the Techno Club have been supporting the project too.

"They're a very talented group and several of them have been helping out, including Oscar Thompson in Year 9 who is making 3D frames at home, and we could not have achieved what we have without Year 11 pupil Ieuan Goldsworthy who has been in charge of social media and publicising everything we do," she said.

And she said the response from the frontline workers had been amazing. "It's been overwhelming. People are so grateful but we're saying no, we are thanking you!"

For more information on the West Wales 3DCrowd please view
https://www.facebook.com/GreenhillCovid19/

If you have a 3D Printer and want to join the 3DCrowd, please view https://www.3dcrowd.uk/