

## Two UH Law Students Produce More Than 400 Free Face Masks for People in Need

Third year UH law students Lauren Hauck and Katie Smith sewed and sent 85 masks to the Women's Shelter at the Institute for Human Services. Another 60 went to the Waikiki Health Center for triage nurses helping incoming patients on the front lines.

Then there were more than 50 for fellow law students at the William S. Richardson School of Law, and their families; more than 10 for students in the History Department and their families; dozens more for students all across the Mānoa campus; another 35 for Lauren's mom, who is a Los Angeles police officer, and for the officers in her department; and even more for aunties and uncles and cousins and friends who still needed them.

"We made 70 the first weekend," remembers Hauck, who operated her roommate's sewing machine while Smith did the designing and cutting when they first started in early April, just after spring break.

Smith said the two friends launched the project – and have now produced about 420 free masks – because of their concern that others were profiting from the pandemic, because of the desperate need for protective facial gear.

"We were hearing from everyone they were going to make masks mandatory," says Hauck. "We wanted to make them available for people who needed them and couldn't afford to order a \$20 mask online," said Smith. "And we've been lucky enough to have generous donations from students and faculty and family and friends." So far the costs have been about \$600, including postage.

"A lot of people in the UH system have contacted us and have gotten our information through word of mouth," says Hauck. "We have a picture with all our mask patterns and we ask 'Let us know how many you need of each.'"

To date they've gone through about 40 yards of fabric and 160-170 yards of elastic. Each 10-yard piece of fabric makes about 100-120 masks, which each take about 10 minutes to cut and sew. Hauck and Smith use 16 inches of elastic for each mask.

Finding the fabric and elastic was the first hurdle. Each roommate, plus boyfriends and other friends spread out and stood in long, slow lines at all the local fabric stores to buy elastic and fabric. That took a week. "We each took one day to try to get as much as we could," says Hauck.

Then they looked online to see where the greatest need was.

“I googled what kinds of places needed mask donations and called IHS and got in touch with the woman who runs the Women’s Shelter near Costco. She said ‘We need any we can get,’” says Hauck. They sent three dozen at first, and then another 50.

Also important was letting their own networks know, including the History Department, where Hauck is a graduate student in addition to attending Law School.

Halfway through the project they created a spreadsheet of mask types and addresses so they would have quick access to create shipping labels. They weighed the masks and envelopes so they knew exact postage.

This coming weekend they have orders for another 20 or so from students and friends of friends who have heard about Hauck and Smith’s project.

Law School Associate Dean of Student Services Ronette Kawakami ’85 said the efforts by these two students have been “terrific, and they have concentrated on paying it forward for others.”

The two students say that their pleated masks do not come with liners, but it’s very easy to fold one in – and a heavy paper liner is perfect. They also suggest that the masks should be washed every day or two.

“They have done something extraordinary that has helped so many people,” said Dean Kawakami.