



Youth-led group gets Mask Day recognized in Vermont

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Tuesday is being celebrated as Vermont Mask Day.

“We’ve been very focused locally and this now was a chance to amplify that statement, statewide,” said Doreen Kraft, the executive director of Burlington City Arts. Kraft has been working since February to get masks to Burlington locals in an artistic fashion, but now has a new partner to fight alongside.

With multiple nonprofits at their back, like Burlington City Arts, Masks4Missions is at the front line of the newly state-recognized, VT Mask Day.

“It’s an incredibly compassionate group of people, very dedicated and, of course, right mission for the right time,” said Kraft.

After graduating high school in the spring but having his summer job canceled, founder of [Masks4Missions](#) Doug Altshuler decided he had to keep himself busy.

“I had planned on just making a lemonade stand size thing for masks, it really wouldn’t have been a large operation,” said Altshuler.

But after seeing the demand for masks in his community and state, Altshuler knew he could help sew his community back together. And in bringing people together, he helped someone else, too. He was able to create a nonprofit that supports nonprofits by designing, making, distributing and selling COVID-19 masks with images from fellow partners.

“You wear a mask to support something so that when you see someone else in the street, you can relate to them and think, ‘Oh, that’s another person that supports my community,’” said Altshuler.

(continued)

Altshuler's effort is youth-led and youth-centric and has already taken off. For the Mask Day Initiative, 30,000 masks will be distributed all over Vermont through nonprofit partners. Five-thousand of which are going to the Vermont Foodbank staff and thousands more going to those receiving food. Altshuler plans on keeping Vermont as healthy as he can for as long as he is needed, but knows that if done correctly, he will run himself right out of business.

"As long as we need masks, I'll do my best to do my part, but my goal is to be out of here as soon as I possibly can," said Altshuler.

On Tuesday and throughout the week, Mask4Missions has planned events such as social media contests, DIY mask tables all over the state and webinars centered around learning more about how masks keep people safe.

The creator of Mask4Missions says getting the day recognized wasn't easy, but is excited for what is already planned.

"We started the idea of a Vermont Mask Day and luckily the state picked it up. We got a concurrent resolution to declare it an official day which was a really amazing step. Ultimately, we are just going to have a lot of things going on throughout the whole week really just focused around masks, and a really close connection as well is with colleges and high schools to really make sure students are getting these messages too," Altshuler said.

For just this week alone they are planning to get 30,000 masks out into the community and hope to get between 10,000-20,000 more over the next few months.

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