



Masks4Missions launches creative and responsible mask-wearing activities

By Vermont Business Magazine

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Vermont Business Magazine Vermont's Legislature passed HCR337 designating October 6, 2020, as Vermont Mask Day. The initiative was led by Doug Altshuler, founder of Masks4Missions, a nonprofit organization that partners with Vermont nonprofits to design, make, distribute, and sell subsidized COVID-19 masks bearing images from its nonprofit partners .

Founded only two months ago, Masks4Missions is the proud organizer of Vermont Mask Day, a state-wide celebration of Vermonters coming together virtually and in mask-protected, socially-distant gatherings to celebrate our shared commitment to healthy communities. Vermont Mask Day will be celebrated as a week of events (October 5-9th), with varied creative activities across the state with nonprofit partners, including Burlington City Arts, Vermont Food Bank, and many others.

"I am beyond proud that this bill gained overwhelming support from the Legislature," said Doug Altshuler, founder of Masks4Missions. "What was just an idea a couple months ago is a real movement that will help keep Vermont safe, support local nonprofits, and strengthen our communities."

"Vermont is leading the nation in suppressing COVID-19 and much of that credit goes to Vermonters stepping up and wearing masks early in this crisis," said Governor Phil Scott. "Vermont Mask Day is a great way to raise awareness for the importance of wearing a mask, and I appreciate the efforts of the Masks4Missions team in helping more Vermonters get the masks they need to keep each other safe."

As a partner with Masks4Missions, Burlington City Arts is facilitating collaborations with other community arts organizations statewide to create artist-led, mask make-and-take events for Vermonters of all ages. These workshops will bring community members together to co-create and share the joy of art-making, further elevating the role the arts play in community engagement.

"Masks4Missions is a courageous, youth-led coalition that understands the role the arts play in creating community and fostering connections," said Doreen Kraft, Executive Director, Burlington City Arts . "The arts, by their nature, are collaborative and can help us unite in supporting and protecting each other. Burlington City Arts is always excited to support Vermont artists and raise visibility for the arts—a sector hit hard by the pandemic."

The celebration of Vermont Mask Day and partnership with Burlington City Arts will be live all week and will include the awarding art cash prizes to Vermonters for best mask designs and social media posts. The prizes will be announced at the Vermont Mask Day GRACE POTTER concert on Friday, October 9, 2020, at the Champlain Valley Expo in Essex, Vermont.

The Masks4Missions initiative includes creating and distributing over 30,000 masks across Vermont through a network of nonprofit partners. One partner, the Vermont Foodbank, will see its entire volunteer staff of over 5,000 receive masks with thousands of additional masks being distributed to those receiving food assistance from the Foodbank.

"With 46% more people struggling with food insecurity because of the pandemic, we are facing a truly unprecedented time," says Vermont Foodbank CEO, John Sayles. "The Foodbank is grateful to be included in the Masks4Missions initiative, which will not only help put food on the table of hungry Vermonters but also keep the health and wellness of our community top of mind."

For more information and resources, visit www.masks4missions.org.