

Social enterprise in Vietnam donates 20,000 medical masks to support vulnerable communities in Washington, D.C.

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Protec, a Vietnamese social enterprise and producer of personal protective equipment, donated 20,000 medical masks to provide life-saving support to healthcare workers and residents in Washington, D.C. The donation of the 20,000 masks have been directed to healthcare workers and patients at Unity Health Care, the largest network of community health care centers in the District.

The social enterprise, which employs workers with disabilities in Vietnam to promote a more socially inclusive workforce, donated its masks to Unity Health Care to recognize the medical network's history of offering comprehensive care to underserved communities in D.C. since its establishment in 1985. Most recently, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Unity Health Care has leveraged its network of over 20 health care centers to provide critical medical services to the capital city's most vulnerable residents and to organize safe housing for the District's homeless population.

Greig Craft, founder of Protec, expressed, "For over 30 years, Unity has cared for D.C.'s most vulnerable residents, when others would not. We are aware that this donation of medical masks comes at a critical time and will enable healthcare workers to continue to deliver life-saving care to the city's residents. Protec and Unity are proud to share a commitment to offering help to disadvantaged communities: we must adopt a spirit of service and care in order to work through this public health crisis together."

The arrival of the medical masks has been viewed as a blessing for the healthcare workers on the frontlines, arriving soon after weeks of continued rises in cases in Washington, D.C. In response to the growth in new cases, Mayor Muriel Bowser enacted new COVID-19 restrictions on November 25 to promote distancing measures and keep residents safe in the capital city.

Dr. Robert Zarr, a pediatrician who has worked to provide medical care to low-income and immigrant communities at Unity Health Care, shared, "In my 20 years as a doctor here, I have never seen a more dire situation, both for medical staff and for patients. Having masks readily available helps immediately decrease transmission of this deadly virus within our clinic walls, but it also gives us a sense of security that we all are doing our part to reduce the risk of infection. My colleagues and I are grateful for this practical and generous gesture of goodwill."

Protec is one of the social enterprises around the world that has adapted its existing production lines to manufacture personal protective equipment in response to urgent shortages. Prior to the launch of its production of 3- and 4-ply medical masks, the enterprise manufactured quality affordable helmets for vulnerable road users in Southeast Asia for over 20 years. As impacted countries continue to face personal protective equipment shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic, Protec aims to continue producing and distributing its medical masks to facilities and communities in need.

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About the Personal PROTEC-tion Project

In 2020, AIP Foundation, a U.S. 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and its partner social enterprise Protec, launched the Personal PROTEC-tion project to produce and distribute FDA-registered and CE-certified medical masks to communities impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. [American Protec PPE](#) serves as their mask-distribution arm in the United States and delivers quality personal protective equipment (PPE) to frontline workers and at-risk individuals. The project also promotes a more socially inclusive workforce, as Protec employs a significant number of workers with physical disabilities in its state-of-the-art factory in Vietnam. The project was made possible with the support of FIA Foundation, a UK-registered charity which aims to protect and improve the lives and environment of people around the world.

About AIP Foundation

AIP Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing road injuries and fatalities in low and middle-income countries. For more than 20 years, AIP Foundation has been delivering effective road safety programs in locations across Asia and Africa. To find out more, visit www.aip-foundation.org or connect with us on Twitter [@AIPFoundation](#).

About Protec

Protec is a social enterprise established by AIP Foundation producing ethically-sourced helmets and face masks. Protec has a factory in Vinh Phuc, Vietnam and an extensive distribution network all across the country. Its profits are reinvested into the local community to improve people's lives in Asia. Fostering a socially inclusive workplace, Protec employs people with disabilities.

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