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## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: APRIL 15, 2020**

(Release #2019/20 – 150)

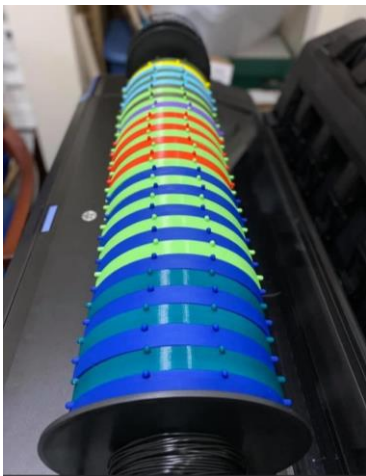
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## FABLab Fabricating Protective Equipment for Healthcare Professionals



HOUSTON COUNTY, GA – The Houston County School District is proud to be home to the FireStarter FABLab, a community maker’s space housed at the Houston County Career Academy. Most recently, FABLab volunteers have been hard at work fabricating personal protective equipment (PPE) for healthcare professionals. The FABLab is making face shields, tension strips, “S” hooks and more to help meet the needs of healthcare professionals.



Donations of the PPE have been made thus far to Houston Healthcare, Navicent, Summer’s Landing, and The Lodge. In just one week’s time, the lab has produced 3,229 items as follows:

- “S” hooks = 640;
- tension strips = 1,781 (pictured top);
- face shields = 135;
- face shield brackets = 401 (pictured left); and
- face shield bands = 200.

The FABLab is also assisting a community sewing group, which to date has made and donated 1,500 masks. The total items produced by the lab includes 72 bias tape tools and pleating tools to support this group.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mark Scott said, “We are committed to doing anything we can to help make a difference in the safety and comfort of our healthcare professionals. The monumental way they are fighting COVID-19 by caring for their patients is extraordinary and at their own personal sacrifice. We are pleased to provide this facility and play a small part in this community effort to support our nurses, doctors and other medical professionals who are on the front lines.”

The FABLab’s managing board member, Jay Flesher, talks frequently with medical staff to identify their most critical needs. The FABLab is producing items needed now to help bridge the gap until the medical equipment supply chain can again meet demand.

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“It’s a tremendous opportunity to empower the makers, micro businesses and manufactures of Middle Georgia,” said Flesher. “By allowing our staff and volunteers the opportunity to be in the lab right now, we are also touching our citizens and medical community in ways that could not be imagined just a few short weeks ago. The FireStarter FABLab is about community education and empowerment every day of the year, but today and for the foreseeable future, it will be about the empowered making a difference in the community.”

Anyone who would like to volunteer to work from home or would like to make a financial contribution toward materials may contact Flesher at 478-919-4177 or [info@firestarterfablab.com](mailto:info@firestarterfablab.com).

#### **About the FireStarter FABLab**

The FireStarter FABLab is a makers’ space, a community workshop to encourage innovation, entrepreneurship and STEM education. FireStarter is designed for custom digital fabrication and contains all of the tools necessary to rapidly conceptualize, digitize, fabricate and assemble a wide range of physical projects. The 7,000 square foot facility houses the following: computer lab with CAD/CAM software; multi-function space that includes CNC machinery, classroom/meeting space, project assembly spaces; machine room with CNC machinery, power tools, and hand tools; and a fully functioning woodworking space. The lab’s capabilities include: photopolymer 3D printing; fused deposition 3D printing; laser cutting and engraving; large and small scale 3 axis machining; vinyl and film cutting; 3D scanning; and circuit fabrication, assembly and testing. During normal operations, anyone interested in woodworking, welding or personal customization of just about anything may register for classes or join to use the tools and equipment. Although closed now to the public due to COVID-19, typically the facility is open in during the week from 4:00 to 9:00 p.m., other than Wednesday, and on Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

For more information about the lab, please visit the [www.FireStarterFABLab.com](http://www.FireStarterFABLab.com).

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