

COVID-19 Community Innovation Stories, Week of April 27, 2020

In the face of the Coronavirus Disease pandemic (COVID-19), the country is seeing innovations in communities that highlight the best of American ingenuity. We highlight these stories to show how many are helping those around them, and prompt everyone to think about how they can help others.¹

City of Shoreline Community Emergency Response Team

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) in the city of Shoreline, Washington, has made the showers at the local recreation centers available for those experiencing homelessness. The showers are available three days per week for four hours each day. The CERT members screen individuals coming in by taking their temperature as a preventative measure. The Shoreline CERT volunteers will begin assisting with food box distribution at a King County Housing Facility in Shoreline in the near future.²

Lysol Factory Workers

The Lysol factory in Somerset County, New Jersey, has dedicated all of their aerosol lines to producing Lysol disinfectant spray. The factory is receiving more than 50 railcar deliveries per month to supply alcohol, a key disinfectant ingredient, for aerosol lines that are operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The company has distributed wallet cards to factory employees to display their essential service status. Employees are staying voluntarily into the next shift in efforts to aid in the fight against COVID-19. Employee morale has shifted from viewing their works as simply a job, to feeling like a front-line fighter against the virus.³

Braskem America Workers

In an effort to ramp up production of polypropylene, a raw material used to produce personal protective equipment (PPE), 43 employees voluntarily isolated at a Pennsylvania Braskem America plant for 28 days. The workers slept, ate, and worked 12-hour shifts at the factory, producing tens of millions of pounds of raw material crucial for the

¹ This document contains references and links to non-federal resources and organizations. This information is meant solely for informational purposes and is not intended to be an endorsement of any non-federal entity by FEMA, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, or the U.S. government.

² CERT COVID-19 Response as of 4/16/2020

³ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-workers-at-a-lysol-plant-have-a-mission-now-11587482618>



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manufacture of face masks, surgical gowns, and disinfectant wipes. By living at the factory, employees could avoid exposure to COVID-19 through daily commutes.^{4,5}

Robots in Medical Settings

A Boston hospital has adopted a Boston Dynamics robot dog name Spot, which can be operated remotely for social distancing and will allow hospital workers to speak with infected patients through a tablet attached to the “face” of the robot. Unlike other wheeled robots, Spot’s “legs” allow the robot to navigate through lines of patients for triage without getting stuck or crashing into other equipment. Spot is also able to relieve some burden from overworked hospital staff by taking over basic tasks like delivering supplies.⁶

Skip-Checkout Phone Applications

A grocery chain in New York has promoted the use of a mobile checkout application that allows customers to spend less time in stores and reduce human contact. Through the app, customers can scan product bar codes while shopping and scan a QR code to indicate they are ready to pay before exiting the store.⁷

Combatting the “Infodemic” with Comics

A comic strip is increasing public awareness about COVID-19 misinformation by featuring cartoon characters that explain why pandemic situations are conducive to viral rumors and how to practice good information hygiene. The message within the comic strip recommends exercising skepticism by conducting fact checks and being aware of emotional, sensationalized, or divisive stories. The comic strip empowers readers to “flatten the curve of misinformation” with graphics that allow for concise and memorable communication.⁸

FEMA’s Best Practice Initiative

Nationwide, there are extraordinary efforts nationwide to support personnel and resource needs to battle the COVID-19 pandemic. FEMA is working to highlight these efforts and encourage everyone to think about what they can do to be a part of providing solutions to help. Visit <https://www.fema.gov/coronavirus/best-practices> for more information.

Topics for the “Best Practices” series are generated from crowd-sourced suggestions. Have an idea? Let us research it! Organizations and individuals can e-mail best practices or lessons learned to fema-cipsupport@fema.dhs.gov.

⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/04/23/factory-masks-coronavirus-ppe/>

⁵ <https://www.inquirer.com/health/coronavirus/coronavirus-ppe-materials-marcus-hook-delaware-county-factory-joe-boyce-20200423.html>

⁶ https://www.wired.com/story/spot-the-coronavirus-doctor-robot-dog/?mbid=social_twitter&utm_brand=wired&utm_campaign=wired&utm_medium=social&utm_social_type=owned&utm_source=twitter

⁷ <https://www.springwise.com/innovation/retail/fairway-coronavirus-skip-checkout-app>

⁸ <https://www.npr.org/2020/04/17/837202898/comic-fake-news-can-be-deadly-heres-how-to-spot-it>

For more information on how to help during COVID-19, visit [FEMA's website for information on donations and volunteering.](#)

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