



Volume 17, Number 5

May 2020

www.circlecranch.com

President's Letter

Hello Circle C Community,

I hope you have all been able to stay healthy and safe during this time of face masks and self-isolation.

First, I'd like to start out by saying: Wow! What an incredible community we have here in Circle C. Toilet paper hoarders aside, it was a beautiful moment to turn on the local KVUE news and see our very own Aileen Chen and over 120 Circle C residents working together to make 700+ masks to donate to health professionals. This collaborative effort to help others during a difficult time was most appreciated by healthcare workers all over Austin. Kudos to all who helped in this endeavor as well as to all that participated in similar events to help those in need.

Circle C is also fortunate to have Jed and Jen Marchak from HelloNabr who work tirelessly on events intended to connect neighbors with one another while helping smaller businesses grow. When their biggest food truck night of the year was unexpectedly cancelled on Friday, March 13, Jed and Jen didn't sit around and feel sorry for themselves. Instead, they jumped into a campaign to provide take-out food options to Circle C-ers during Austin's shelter-in-place order.

Jed immediately began working with the food truck community and local health officials to establish a safe code of operations with new COVID-19 awareness guidelines. Circle C HOA provided the use of our parking lot and Jen invited food truck owners experiencing financial loss to bring their business to our neighborhood. A HelloNabr team member remained present at all times, acting as food expeditor to maintain a contactless drive-thru service and allowing only one food truck per time slot. Jed and Jen made the decision to not charge the food trucks during this pandemic, so they did this work at their own expense.

Speaking of food, please remember to visit our very own Circle C Café owned by fellow residents Emily and Tray Horvath. In addition to their tasty regular menu and extraordinary specials like Ginger Salmon and Island Curry Chicken, they now have special evenings and days when they offer to-go adult beverages, like Bloody Marys and Adult Poptails (watermelon agave popsicles), to help raise funding for the Central Texas Food Bank. This allows neighbors to partake in adult libations, all for a good cause.

Stories such as these of Circle C people combining fun with hard work to make our world a better place are plentiful, and every new story is as heartwarming as the last. Thank you, Circle C neighbors, for all that you do for others.

Take care of yourselves. I hope to see you out and about when it is again safe to gather together. Let's all hope it is sooner rather than later.

Important Dates In May

Sunday, May 10, 2020

Mother's Day

Monday, May 25, 2020

Memorial Day. HOA Office is closed

Thursday, May 28, 2020

Last scheduled day of school for AISD

May 27, 2020

Circle C HOA Board Meeting, now online

Watering Restrictions:

Please visit your water providers website to view current watering restrictions.

City of Austin:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/departments/watering-restrictions>

Midtex:

(South West Water Company): <https://swwc.com/texas/drought>

Irrigation After the Rain:

If you see high spraying of water near retention ponds after a heavy rain or storm, it is likely recirculated water being sprayed further into the landscape to prevent stagnant water in the watershed. Circle C has multiple City of Austin watershed retention ponds that capture storm water and use that water to irrigate the surrounding landscape.

"Announcements" Continued on Page 3

Home is a shelter
from storms—
all sorts of storms.

—William J. Bennett



Every situation is different. If you could use some
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"Announcements..." Continued from Cover Page

Oak Wilt in Circle C



Trees with yellow ribbons on La Crosse Avenue
Indicating Oak Wilt Disease

Ah, springtime in Austin. The mere mention of the season conjures up images of Texas bluebonnets and buzzing bees hovering beside fragrant flower buds while the warm sun beckons us all outside.

There is another creature in Texas, however, that is attracted to the outdoors in the spring as well, particularly to newly pruned or otherwise injured oak trees.

The *nitidulid beetle*, known informally as the "sap beetle", is a small, flying insect ranging from 1/8" to 1/4" that unknowingly assists in spreading perhaps the greatest enemy of oak trees to date: oak wilt disease.

They do this because they are attracted to the sugary smells of decaying fruit or fermenting plant sap. When an unsuspecting homeowner decides to prune their oaks during the spring or summer season, or when a weed eater accidentally nicks an oak tree root, a fresh wound occurs on the tree at a most perilous time. The sugary sap within the tree then leaks from the open wounds with an irresistible scent, to a sap beetle at least. So, the little beetles fly from one injured tree to another, drinking up the delicious, nutrient-rich sap of each tree along the way.

Now, this progressive dinner party of sap beetles wouldn't be a problem if a prior course had not included the sap near a fungal mat full of spores just beneath the bark of a diseased red oak. Fungal mats, found only in red oak trees, are breeding grounds for the spores (seeds) of the *Bretziella fagacearum* fungus that causes oak wilt disease. Oak wilt disease is the aggressive disease that has wiped out hundreds of trees in mere months.



Image courtesy of Texas A&M Forest Service
TexasOakWilt.org



Photo Courtesy of Dennis Markwardt
Vegetation Management Division, TxDot.gov

vascular tissue, eventually cutting off the water supply within the tree and causing the oak to wilt and die.

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CCHOA NUMBERS

HOA Mgmt Office ..info@circlecranch.info or 512-288-8663
HOA Financial Office..tgiles@mgilescpa.com or 512-451-9901
Aquatics Director director@ccswim.net or 512-288-4239

Newsletter Publisher

Peel, Inc. advertising@PEELinc.com or 512-263-9181

Circle C Amenities

Circle C Avaña Pool 512-292-1518
Circle C Café 512-288-6058
Circle C CDC..... 512-288-9792
Circle C Swim Center 512-288-6057
Circle C Community Center Pool..... 512-301-8259
Grey Rock Golf Course (*City Owned/Operated*)..... 512-288-4297
Grey Rock Tennis Club 512-301-8685
Circle C Grey Rock Pool 512-291-8398

CIRCLE C GATED COMMUNITIES

Enclave off Spruce Canyon (KB)

Spectrum Management 512-834-3900

Enclave off La Crosse (Streetman)

Plateau Property Management.....Rosalyn Peterson, 512-441-1041

Fairways Estates

Spectrum Management 512-834-3900

Park West

Goodwin Management..... Marilyn Childress 512-502-7509

Muirfield

Real Manage..... Tom Ramirez-Boldo, 866-476-2573

Avana Estates

Relevant Management..... Kim Todd, 512-580-4212

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Stop Signs512-457-4885

Street Light Maintenance 311

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Kiker Elementary512-414-2584

Mills Elementary512-841-2400

Cowan Elementary.....512-841-2700

Bailey Middle.....512-414-4990

Gorzycki Middle School.....512-841-8600

Bowie High School512-414-5247

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City of Austin. 512-494-9400

Texas Gas Service 800-700-2443

Water City of Austin 512-972-1000

MidTex Water Company 866-654-7992

Solid Waste City of Austin 512-974-1945

Post Office Oak Hill Station 800-275-8777

"Oak Wilt" Continued from Page 3

So, why are spring and summer the most dangerous times for pruning of oaks? Because the fungal mats are formed during winter in preparation



Image courtesy of Wikimedia.org

to attract the sap beetles in the spring and summer months. Also, it is during the spring and summer months that the trees are most active with moving the water and minerals absorbed from the ground (through osmosis) up through the xylem tubes within the tree trunk to the new branches to provide energy to produce new leaf buds. While that movement is traveling up the tree, the leaves are busily transpiring most of the extra water back into the atmosphere (through evaporation), keeping only enough to combine with carbon dioxide to produce sugars (through photosynthesis) to take back down the tree (via the phloem).

Fun fact: Xylem is replaced every year and the leftover tissue becomes the internal tree rings that reveal its age.

Basically, spring and summer are like feeding frenzy times for the tree with an abundance of sap and nutrients flowing up and down the tree at the same time. When the tree is injured during this time, the open wound acts like a valve from which the excessive sap flows out of the cut, attracting beetles. Consequently, sap beetles are the most active in the spring and summer months, spreading spores from the mats of diseased red oak trees to other oaks.

It is therefore best to wait until late July through January to trim oak trees. This protects not only trees on our own properties, but all the trees in the surrounding neighborhood.

Photo of a Naturally Grafted Root



Photo Courtesy of Dennis Markwardt, Vegetation Management Division, TxDot.gov

The second way for oak wilt to spread to other trees is through a common root system where roots have naturally grafted together to become part of each other. Live oak trees in particular have an extremely dense common root system with multiple grafted roots. They do this partly to help stabilize each other during storms

or high winds, but mostly to provide nutrients to one another if one tree is in an area with soil lacking in essential nutrients (like nitrogen or phosphorous). The benevolent and majestic live oak trees have found a way to share the wealth with each other underground.



Image Courtesy of Kara Canary

Unfortunately, these common root systems also provide a quick and direct avenue for a fungal infection to spread.

Due largely to this common root system, oak wilt disease can travel through the grafted root from one live oak tree to another, spreading at the rate of 75 feet a year, with or without the aid of any beetles.

Trees on La Crosse Avenue and in other areas of Circle C have been diagnosed with oak wilt disease. This is particularly disturbing because lateral oak roots can reach up to 100 feet wide. With that spread, the act of live oak trees grafting roots together underneath a wide street is easily achieved and the oak wilt disease could quickly down a street and across to other houses, potentially wiping entire streets of red and live oaks trees during the summer season.

Sadly, there is no cure for oak wilt disease. Once the trees display the symptoms, they already have the disease. The only actions we residents can take to protect our own trees are preventative measures such as vigilantly watching for injured trees, informing neighbors of possible diseased trees, and keeping our own trees injury free. If infected live oak trees are dangerously close to healthy trees, residents can take expensive drastic actions like digging a four foot deep trench around the infected tree and severing the connection of the root system to other trees, or implementing a pressurized injection system using Propiconazole fungicide to prepare healthy live oak trees to fight the spread of infection.

What Are the Signs of Oak Wilt?

Trees display many signs of oak wilt disease. Below are items to look for in each type of oak.

- **Evergreen or live oak trees** with oak wilt will exhibit a yellowing or browning of the veins within the leaves (veinal leaf necrosis) as well as a browning of edges (tip burn). Searching through the dropped leaves on the ground under the tree might reveal leaves with these symptoms.



Photo Courtesy of Texas A&M Forest Service, TexasOakWilt.org

Infected live oaks will also experience a browning of the treetop or crown. This can be visible using drones above the tree. According to the Texas A&M Forest Service, oak wilt infected live oak trees usually die within one to six months.

- **Red oak trees** (such as Shumard, Spanish, Pin, or Blackjack) with oak wilt will exhibit less obvious veinal leaf necrosis symptoms and a more prominent tip burn. However, a growing fungal mat underneath loosened bark will be visible along with a distinct strong smell similar to that of fermenting fruit, so oak wilt



Photo Courtesy of Dennis Markwardt, Vegetation Management Division, TxDot.gov



Photo Courtesy of Texas A&M Forest Service, TFSWeb.kamu.edu

diseased oaks are often easier to discover than other oaks. The strong-smelling fungal mats attract the sap beetles that fly to the mats and crawl around, innocently collecting the spores to carry to the next injured oak tree, so they often serve as hot spots (or centers) for the spread of oak wilt. Infected red oaks will often turn bright autumn colors (flagging) during the summer months before they die.

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"Oak Wilt" Continued from Page 4

They are the most susceptible to oak wilt with no chance of survival. Conversely, they usually die within two to four weeks after the first sign of symptoms.

- **White oak trees** vary in their amount of damage, depending on type. Bur, Nutleaf, and Post oaks are the least susceptible and will display fewer signs. These white oaks, when infected with oak wilt, will experience some browning of the leaves and modest canopy loss but will most often recover. Lacey, Chinquapin, and White Shin oaks, however, have a strong connected root system similar to live oaks thus will experience greater canopy loss and, like red or live oaks, can die in large numbers.

How Can We Prevent the Spread of Oak Wilt?

- **Only prune trees in fall and winter months.** Although July and August are times when the tree sap flow is not as active, it is also a time when Texas oak trees tend to be stressed due to extreme heat and lack of water. So, although the official recommended time to prune oaks is from July through January, it is best to *wait until September through January to prune oak trees in Texas.*

- **Only hire Texas Oak Wilt Certified (TOWC) arborists to prune trees** to ensure cuts are made swiftly and in a proper manner, thereby causing minimal damage. For a list of recommended certified arborists with additional oak wilt training, visit: <https://isatexas.com/for-the-public/texas-oak-wilt-qualified-arborists/>

- **Ensure all pruning equipment is thoroughly cleaned with Lysol, Pine-Sol, or Listerine.** It is a good idea to provide your own disinfectant spray to ensure a generous application. As an extra precaution, ask to spray the equipment yourself or to watch it being sprayed before any pruning equipment is used on your trees. (Note: bleach is no longer recommended as it is corrosive to pruning equipment.)

- **Ensure tree pruners immediately and thoroughly spray each branch cut with paint.** It does not have to be pruners paint; any spray paint will do, but it must be sprayed immediately. Every minute that passes without covering the wound increases the chances that an infected sap beetle might be attracted to the open cut and spread the spores. Offer to provide your own spray paint to ensure it is applied generously.

- **Protect exposed or raised tree roots from lawn mower or weed whacker damage.** Mulch or plant flowers that do not need trimming around exposed/raised tree roots.

- **Promptly burn all red oak trees that have died from oak wilt.** Oak wilted trees usually die in late summer or early fall. Do NOT transport or store red oak wood for firewood. Fungal mats can develop on the wood the following spring. Also, do not purchase oak firewood unless it is burned before February. For more information, visit DontMoveTheFirewood.org.

- **Diversify your landscape** with a variety of trees to encourage a less dense root system for the oaks. As pretty as they may be, try to avoid red oak trees since they are a carrier for this disease. Options for Texas native tree varieties are: Big Tooth Maple, Texas Ash, Texas Persimmon, Cedar Elm, Texas Mountain Laurel, Mexican Buckeye, Carolina Buckthorn, Escarpment Black Cherry, Desert Willow, Mexican Plum, Eve's Necklace, and Texas Redbud. For help with selecting tree varieties that fit your needs, visit TexasTreePlanting.tamu.edu/ExpressSelector.aspx

A special thank you to **Karl Flocke**, Forest Service Woodland Ecologist for Travis County, and to Circle C resident **Amy Geppert** with Texas A&M Forest Services for their help with this article.

- To learn more about oak wilt, visit TexasOakWilt.org.

AQUATICS NEWS

Spring Hours

Through May 31st

Swim Center

Monday- Friday: 6a-10a Lap Swim Only

3:30p-8p Rec Swim

Saturday: 7a-10a Lap Swim Only

10:30a-6p Rec Swim

Sunday: 10a-6p Rec swim

For the most up to date information on pool opening dates at the Community Center, Avaña, and Greyrock pools, please visit circlecranch.com.

Summer Hours

June 1 - Aug 16

Swim Center

Monday: CLOSED

Tuesday-Friday: 6a-10a Lap Swim Only

10a-8p Rec Swim

Saturday: 7a-10a Lap Swim Only

10:30a-8p Rec Swim

Sunday: 10a-8p Rec swim

Community Center

Wednesday-Monday: 11a-7p

Tuesday: CLOSED

Avaña

Friday-Wednesday: 9a-7p

Thursday: CLOSED

Greyrock

Thursday-Tuesday: 12p-8p

Wednesday: CLOSED

Now Hiring!

The Circle C Swim Center is now hiring all positions for the Summer season. Red Cross Lifeguarding Certifications are required for Lifeguard positions; we offer Lifeguard courses on a monthly basis at a discounted rate (contingent upon employment with us). You must have an interview before registering for a lifeguard class. You must be 15 years or older. Lifeguard Classes fill up quickly so email us today! Contact Amanda at coordinator@cswim.net to set up an interview.

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For more information on all programs offered at Circle C Aquatics, email Amanda at coordinator@cswim.net.

WILDFLOWER NOTES

*Submitted by Amy McCullough, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center
Photography by Wildflower Center (pink evening primrose) and Lee Page (Engelmann's daisy)*

Here's what's likely to be blooming, fruiting or setting seed in Central Texas this time of year. Look for these native plants around town and perhaps in your own backyard!

ANTELOPE-HORNS (ASCLEPIAS ASPERULA)

Talk about a pollinator powerhouse. Antelope-horns milkweed supports adorably fuzzy bees (a common sight at the Center) and other fluttery insect friends. But its main jam is providing food for monarch (and queen) caterpillars as an important larval host. Commonly seen in the Wildflower Center's research plots, *Asclepias asperula* also appears along Texas roadsides, and its big, greenish-white pompom blooms are hard to miss. In fact, the striking flowers of this sun-loving perennial almost look as if molded from candle wax — but certainly aren't considering its preferred terrain of exposed prairies. The interesting common name comes from the curved shape of its seed pods, which open to bare their milkweed fluff in early summer, when seeds may be collected. Hook 'em horns indeed!

Photograph by Pam Williams



PURPLE CONEFLOWER (ECHINACEA PURPUREA)

When we're looking for stunning images of butterflies on flowers, you can bet your weight in pollen the name "purple coneflower" isn't far from our searching fingertips. This member of the aster family is frequented by winged beauties of all stripes, making it a favorite of nature photographers. The genus name shares a root with "echidna," the term for a family of spiny mammals; here, it alludes to the central disk's mounded, pointy appearance. Though its vibrant color and value to butterflies — it's one of our top five spring nectar plants for supporting monarchs — offer plenty to gush about, *Echinacea purpurea* is perhaps best known for its medicinal properties. It's commonly found in herbal teas and extracts said to strengthen the immune system. However you take it, this is one bountiful bristle-topped beauty.

Photograph by Val Bugh



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Learn more about these monarch-supporting plants at wildflower.org/learn/power-the-migration, and find many more plants on our database at wildflower.org/plants-main.
.....

SUPPORT THE CENTER DURING CLOSURE

The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center needs your support now more than ever. We rely entirely on memberships, admissions, donations, class registrations, ticket sales and private events to operate, and all of these revenue streams have been impacted.

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The Austin Real Estate Market and COVID-19

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Over 700 Homemade Masks in 7 Days

The Story of Aileen Chen and Circle C Residents Participating in the "100 Million Masks Challenge" to Save Lives During a Pandemic



Meet **Aileen Chen**. She is friendly, smart, and knows how to corral people together in a hot minute to help those in need. In addition to this list of attributes, she also has a kind and generous heart.

On March 19, 2020, Aileen noticed a post on the Circle C Facebook page. Fellow resident **Niki Nislar Ratliff** had provided a link to an interview with a Seattle-based nurse requesting cloth face masks for medical workers because many

had no protection. In the interview, the nurse proposed a challenge to the American people to make 100 million masks for health care workers without enough personal protective equipment (PPE). *"I thought it seemed like a great thing we could do as a community, to do something that would be of great value for our local medical personnel,"* said Niki.

Niki's post exploded with suggestions, advice, and offers to help. A local doctor on the resident page reminded Niki that filters were needed for protection from COVID-19. She mentioned that doctors in her group were improvising by using vacuum bags or Filtrete filters. Another resident happened to have a stash of Filtrete filters and offered them for the masks, and resident Doreen Landrum volunteered to help design and test out a mask-making pattern that included a pocket for a filter. The doctor requested the use of Velcro to keep the filter in place, and so the project began. Niki was inundated with multiple offers to help and several requests for PPE from several residents, mostly in the medical field.

The project quickly took on a life of its own and new posts were made, with important information getting lost in the sea of comments. This endeavor needed a leader.

Enter Aileen Chen. With a background in strategy consulting in New York City, Shanghai, and Singapore, Aileen Chen has a talent for analyzing a situation and knowing how to act. *"I felt compelled to help figure out how to pool our talents, ideas, and resources together to address this shortage in a bigger, more systematic way."*

Aileen noticed the multiplying comments and people missing information, so she offered to help create lists for both the helpers

and the ones that needed help. With much relief, Niki gratefully accepted Aileen's kind offer and later proclaimed, *"Aileen became coordinator extraordinaire."*

Aileen created a Google Doc categorizing mask-makers, material suppliers, and service providers in need of PPE. She also started a separate private Facebook page for ease in communicating. *"I felt an enormous responsibility to keep things moving as quickly as possible, and get masks made by our volunteers out to people as soon as they came in, because doing so could mean saving more lives."*

Three days later, on March 22, Aileen had compiled a list of more than 80 volunteers and requests for more than 800 masks. Niki watched Aileen move swiftly and efficiently. *"She is amazing... more than amazing. She has super-powers of grace, humility, and organization."*

Soon after, Austin Mayor Steve Adler declared a "shelter-in-place" city ordinance. Aileen quickly adjusted. *"Besides a few people I've spoken with in person from a distance, communication with all other volunteers and mask recipients (usually with 50 people per day) have all been over Messenger and text. It's been amazing how this project has been launched and coordinated all remotely."*

Aileen dubbed her dining room the "Mask Castle," and set boundaries where her own family could not enter in order to maintain a clean environment for the masks. *"From the start, I wanted to minimize the exchange of materials as much as possible, limiting to primarily one party managing the materials (the compassionate Rita and Chris Noak who prep and manage our materials),"* explains Aileen. *"We use masks when processing the materials and wash our hands often, and we ask the quilters to also practice the same precautions."*

Under Aileen's organization, the community continued to work tirelessly to manufacture and package masks to deliver to service people that needed PPE. Below are just a few of the helpers in action.

Together, these and other hard-working Circle C residents made, donated, and delivered over 700 masks in just 7 days!

"The outpouring of support from the community was tremendous," says Aileen.

"Seeing so many people working so hard together for such a worthy cause is incredible," exclaims Niki.

And the medical community thanked them.

After spending approximately 12-15 hours a day coordinating, messaging, and collaborating for three weeks straight, Aileen is exhausted.

What keeps her going? Gratitude. For every bunch of masks received, this tired mom will not end her day without posting pictures of the masks received and packed for pick-up along with a thank you to each volunteer involved. She also posts every night important updates for the next day's status.

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Circle C Spotlight

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"All of this would not be possible without the compassion, generosity, talent, and self-sacrifice of every single person helping. From prepping materials, sewing masks, refining our mask patterns and testing out new mask designs with healthcare workers, and connecting with organizations needing masks—each volunteer gave their time, energy and heart to this initiative. This initiative really shows the power of the collective."

She does not forget to thank her family either: *"I am so grateful that my family understood and supported this. My husband (Lawrence Ho) has been super hands-on with the kids and managing the house. My mother-in-law (Josie Ho), who lives with us, is a fantastic cook and so helpful."* Her daughters have made their own sacrifices: *"I am thankful that my 10 and 8 year-old daughters are self-motivated, rational, and compassionate. Even though I did not spend as much time with them over the past few weeks because of this project, my girls were rooting for me daily with motivational drawings and afternoon snacks."*

The example of care and concern for others has evidently been contagious for her daughters. *"When my younger daughter showed me the tiny mask she made for the Tooth Fairy's visit that night to protect her from the coronavirus, it was a proud parenting moment for me."*

When asked if there is anyone else she would like to personally thank, she responded with, *"Oh, where do I start?? This whole project has brought so much light and hope during this rather challenging time, enabling us to channel our energy towards something positive and impactful. Every single person involved made this possible."*

Because she is Aileen, however, and gratitude is a part of who she is, she could not stop there without mentioning at least a few names.

*"In particular, I want to thank the incredibly kind-hearted **Rita Noak** and her husband Chris, who selflessly donated their time and materials (and house) to this venture, working diligently daily to make sure quilters have the materials they need. Also, **Niki Nislar** Ratliff—whose initiative in asking how our community can help was what triggered my interest—is always ready to pitch in wherever needed. She has been a pillar of support for me from the get-go. **Doreen Landrum, Cheryl Grant, and Michelle Gaines** who have generously given their time and advice with the mask designs they spent lots of time experimenting and perfecting. And so many others like **Meena Matai, Yousra Wafa, and Shilpa Kerkar** who consistently reach out to offer their help besides making masks or prepping materials. All the people who spent hours upon hours sewing, and then going back for more, like **Diana Hubbard, Sung Park-Ordaz, Mariah Justice Watkins, Susanna Eilers, Kathy Barfield, Deborah Marcus,, Marion Olguin, Lisa Peters, Olga Ovcharenko, Anita Howe, Lisa Williams, Diane Dalton, Sarah Samarchi, Cathy Dougherty, Lisa Andrews, Elvia Trautman, Nancy Elton, Ellen Torreyson, Leslie Quinnell, Cheryl Vaughn, Waleska-Robin Bonthorne, Cindy Thompson, Li Huang, LaShelle Cargil, Sybil Momii, Kristen Moore, Christina O'Brien, Duyen Ho, Cyndi Christenson, Linda Dismuke, Gwen Price, Susan Stevens, and so many others** — you all make this possible. There are also numerous others who are not part of this particular project but make masks for family, friends, and organizations. Lastly, a lot of Circle C residents showed their support by donating materials as well as*

money for buying more materials. Thank you all. Everyone is pitching in to help our society move forward."

So, where does Aileen go from here? She doesn't appear to want to stop anytime soon.

"At the time of this writing, we are three and a half weeks in and have 150+ volunteers and made and given out more than 2,400 cloth masks to healthcare/essential workers and people in Circle C who need masks for health/work reasons."

In closing, Aileen Chen would like to mention a few words about her Circle C Community. *"This project enabled me to meet so many people I otherwise would not have had the pleasure to meet. The compassion, collaboration, and generosity I've seen working on this project makes me so proud to be a part of this community."*

The Circle C Homeowners Association and staff hope we can speak on behalf of our collective community to say, in turn, that we are more than proud to have people like Aileen Chen and the rest of the hard-working individuals involved in this project or similar projects in our own neighborhood and beyond.

Those in need of masks, please contact Aileen at CircleCmasks@gmail.com

To view all the pictures of the volunteers that donated their time to make the masks, please visit www.circlecranch.com.



Niki Nislar Ratliff

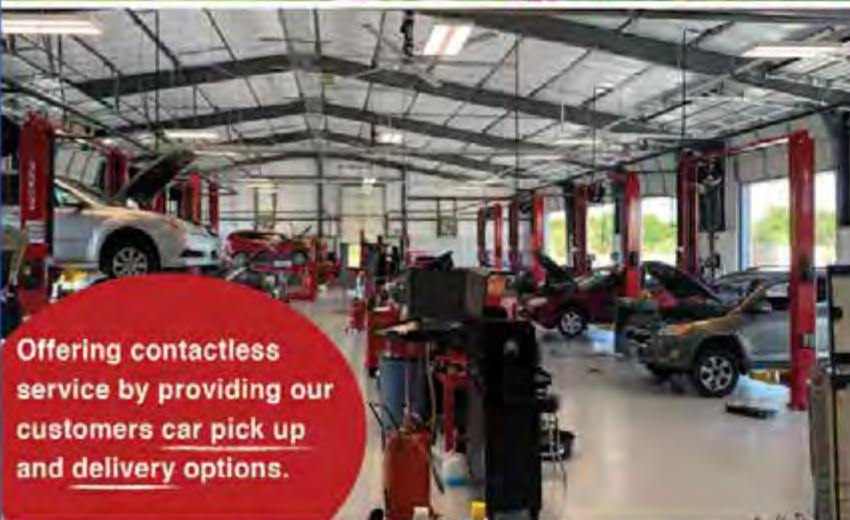


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"Absolutely the best customer service, Honesty and integrity. Thank you McSpadden's!!!" -Debbie R.



"Thank you McSpadden's for kindness, great work, great prices and an awesome place to wait. I will be back!!" -Karen D.

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Brooks Miller and the Mask Extenders



Officer Berry Using a Mask Extender Printed by Brooks Miller (Pictured Above)

Brooks Miller is a 13-year-old boy in 8th grade at Gorzycki Middle School. He likes to be silly with his friends and enjoys mind games. He also happens on the autism spectrum and has lately become a local hero.

Brooks owns a 3D printer that he typically uses to make puzzles and figurines. The printer was a source of entertainment for Brooks until his mother, Janan Miller, noticed a story on Facebook about a Boy Scout somewhere in America using his own 3D printer to make bendable plastic pieces with tabs used to take the pressure of the elastic off of the ears on face masks. Due to the threat of the coronavirus, people in the service industry now wear face masks with elastic rings to place on the ears for up to 12 or 15 hours. Many of these service providers therefore experience chapped or bleeding areas behind their ears. So, the Facebook story about the Boy Scout mentioned that he had begun using his 3D printer to make a thin, plastic piece with tabs that can bend around the back of the head. With the use of this plastic piece, the elastic rings intended for the ears could instead be pulled further back to reach the tabs on the plastic extender, taking the pressure off the ears and onto the plastic extender.

Janan called her son over to read the story, and Brooks didn't hesitate to jump into action. This was a way to help others during a difficult time of a pandemic. Within just a few days, Brooks and a family friend,

Andrew Boy, produced approximately 250 mask extenders that they distributed to friends and family members. Word spread and soon they had multiple requests for more extenders.

After supplying enough COVID compliant extenders to friends and family members, the Millers turned their focus to first providers: healthcare workers, police officers and fire fighters. Brooks now works 18 hours a day printing these extenders, switching out a new print every hour. Mom Janan takes and manages orders. Younger sister Bree (9 years old) and friends Claire (9) and Kyla (16) write handwritten notes to the responders,

thanking them for risking their lives to save others. Older brother Brody (16) delivers the extenders.

Other friends with 3D printers joined in the project and the Miller family soon had a 3D community working together to make mask extenders for the Austin. Since April 6th, the Miller family, together with the rest of the 3D community, has produced and distributed over 700 mask extenders to various fire stations, emergency medical technicians, police officers, cancer patients, long-term care facilities, home health care workers, cancer centers, and hospitals.

The Austin Police Department recently put in a request for 2,000 extenders!

Materials can be expensive, but luckily friends, neighbors, and even strangers have contributed funding to help keep this project going. The Millers are also hoping others with 3D printers might want to join in on this effort and help make some extenders for service providers as well.

If any neighbors care to participate in this endeavor, please visit [COVIDWarriorsATX](https://www.facebook.com/COVIDWarriorsATX) on Facebook or email Janan at COVIDWarriorsATX@gmail.com.



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