



Navajo Nation IHS medical facilities receive protective face shields from Ellen DeGeneres & Portia De Rossi's company General Public

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 10, 2020



PHOTO: General Public, a company owned by Ellen Degeneres and her wife Portia de Rossi, delivered 240 protective face shields to IHS medical staff in Crownpoint and Gallup on Wednesday, May 6, 2020.

GALLUP, N.M. — On Wednesday, Indian Health Service (IHS) medical facilities that serve the Navajo Nation and neighboring tribes received an encouraging donation of protective face shields for medical staff from Ellen DeGeneres and her wife, Portia De Rossi. The donations came through De Rossi's art company, called General Public. Approximately 240 face shields were delivered to the Crownpoint Health Care Facility, Rehoboth McKinley Christian Health Care Services and Gallup Indian Medical Center.

General Public is an art publishing company that uses advanced 3-D technologies to print paintings with all the dimensions and textures of the original. In partnership with digital cutter company MultiCam, General Public utilized their combined technology and resources to successfully create 3-D printed face shields. Those face shields have been donated to medical facilities and public safety departments across the United States.

Melissa Shoemaker, a citizen of the Navajo Nation residing in Chicago, said that when COVID-19 spread to the Navajo Nation in the southwest, she made sure to check in with her sibling who works at RMCHCS. Her sister said they were running dangerously low on personal protective equipment (PPE). This spurred Shoemaker to take the initiative and reach out to General Public.

"I randomly saw a video of Ellen and Portia talking about making and donating protective face shields, and just out of concern for my sibling and our Navajo people, I decided to reach out to Ellen and Portia as a shot in the dark. Thankfully, General Public's president Randi Spieker responded to my inquiry and immediately began coordinating the donation to be flown by Michael Rogers, the company's founder and pilot, to Gallup for distribution," said Shoemaker.

Shoemaker reported that the face shields were delivered to Gallup on Wednesday and were immediately distributed to IHS medical staff. She added that in a recent televised NBC interview, Shoemaker saw Council Delegate Eugene Tso (Chinle) tearfully make a testimony and plea for help. She said it broke her heart and further fueled her call to action.

“The Navajo Nation is very thankful for the prompt donation of PPE for our front line warriors. A price can’t be put on answering the call of duty our front-line needs and all the help in fighting the unseen enemy. We are very thankful, thank you,” said Council Delegate Eugene Tso.

Council Delegate Amber Kanazbah Crotty, a close family friend to Shoemaker, commended her for taking action and initiating a significant PPE delivery that would protect medical staff and aid with continuing the fight against the coronavirus on the Navajo Nation.

“I am incredibly proud and thankful for Melissa for taking the initiative and having the compassion to think about her sibling’s safety and to protect our frontline workers helping our people fight this virus,” said Delegate Crotty, adding “And I am very grateful for Ellen, Portia, Randi, Micheal and General Public for immediately responding to the Navajo Nation’s call for aid. The Nation will be forever grateful to them and I would like to recognize their contribution to helping our impacted communities.”

Speaker of the 24th Navajo Nation Council Seth Damon also recognized DeGeneres and De Rossi for their impact. “The Navajo Nation is beyond grateful for the amazing work being done by our front-line responders. Just as impactful is the work of people like Ellen DeGeneres, Portia De Rossi, the amazing staff of General Public and MultiCam, and our allies, like Melissa Shoemaker, across the country that listen to our call for help. Your efforts help save lives,” said Speaker Damon.

###