Kim McMonagle, left, activities director at Christ the King Manor in DuBois, and her assistant, Diane Bogacki, created about 500 cloth face masks and about 50 plastic face shields to protect employees and patients during the pandemic.

Contributed photos

DuBois nursing home does battle with 'INVISIBLE ENEMY'

Keeping the elderly safe during the COVID-19 pandemic is top on the minds of everyone, especially nursing home staff.

At Christ the King Manor in DuBois, an agency of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Erie, Paula Felton-Werner, administrator, is doing battle every day with what she calls "an invisible enemy."

According to researchers, a significant number of COVID victims worldwide are elderly.

The agency's 430 employees, she says, are vital to winning the war against the coronavirus.

"I am astounded by the willingness of our staff to do everything that is needed," Felton-Werner says.

As soon as word got out in February that several nursing home residents in Seattle, Washington, had succumbed to the disease, Christ the King expanded its safety protocols. Every day, without fail, employees are surveyed by administrators, who ask a number of detailed questions, among them: Where have you traveled since your last shift? Where have you stopped to get gasoline? Have you kept six feet from others you don't live with?

Also, all employees have their temperatures checked daily.

"It's just that critical for us to be this diligent," Felton-Werner says.

As of this writing, Christ the King Manor has not had a single case of COVID-19. It wants to keep it that way.

Felton-Werner asked Kim McMonagle, activities director, and McMonagle's assistant, Diane Bogacki, if they would take on a project that would answer a critical need: face masks.

As seamstresses, the pair got to work gathering fabric, lining and elastic bands, some of which were already on the premises. McMonagle's mom, however, donated most of the colorful cotton fabric. Meanwhile, employees took turns coming in to help in any way they could to assemble pieces and tie strings.

In the end, they made about 500 face masks, allowing employees to have at least one, maybe two, so they could launder them for different shifts. McMonagle and Bogacki also gathered plastic and other material to create about 50 face shields.

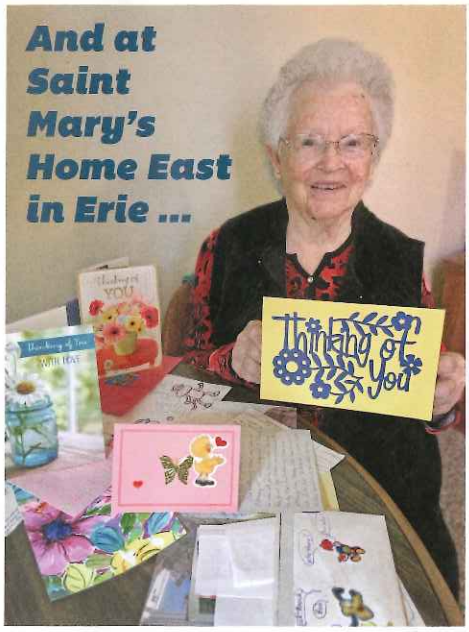
A member of Ss. Peter and Paul Parish in the nearby Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, McMonagle was inspired by the camaraderie and commitment of employees as they responded to the crisis.

"I've been activities director for 26 years and this has showed how the human spirit and human love is present in everyone when a need arises," McMonagle says.

Besides creating face masks and shields, though, Felton-Werner and the staff have been busy enforcing social distancing among residents. There are no more group activities and no visitors have been permitted for safety reasons.

Christ the King has purchased iPads so residents can chat remotely with their families. Also, ice cream social time and pizza parties are taken to individual rooms, instead of being offered in group settings. At Easter, Father Matias Quimno, chaplain, went room to room to bless each resident.

"I think Christ the King is doing everything right," McMonagle says. "When this [pandemic] is all over, we're going to look back and say, 'All is good.'" ✝



▲ Ninety-year-old Eileen Chapman, a resident of Erie's Saint Mary's Home East, has received greeting cards every day from friends and family who cannot visit during the coronavirus outbreak. Practicing strict social distancing, she says, "I try to keep moving. I do exercises and walk down the hallway. I don't get too close to people, but we wave! I just do my best like everyone else."

Kim McMonagle, left, activities director at Christ the King Manor in DuBois, and her assistant, Diane Bogacki, created about 500 cloth face masks and about 50 plastic face shields to protect employees and patients during the pandemic.

Contributed photos

DuBois nursing home does battle with 'INVISIBLE ENEMY'

Keeping the elderly safe during the COVID-19 pandemic is top on the minds of everyone, especially nursing home staff.

At Christ the King Manor in DuBois, an agency of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Erie, Paula Felton-Werner, administrator, is doing battle every day with what she calls "an invisible enemy."

According to researchers, a significant number of COVID victims worldwide are elderly.

The agency's 430 employees, she says, are vital to winning the war against the coronavirus.

"I am astounded by the willingness of our staff to do everything that is needed," Felton-Werner says.

As soon as word got out in February that several nursing home residents in Seattle, Washington, had succumbed to the disease, Christ the King expanded its safety protocols. Every day, without fail, employees are surveyed by administrators, who ask a number of detailed questions, among them: Where have you traveled since your last shift? Where have you stopped to get gasoline? Have you kept six feet from others you don't live with?

Also, all employees have their temperatures checked daily.

"It's just that critical for us to be this diligent," Felton-Werner says.

As of this writing, Christ the King Manor has not had a single case of COVID-19. It wants to keep it that way.

Felton-Werner asked Kim McMonagle, activities director, and McMonagle's assistant, Diane Bogacki, if they would take on a project that would answer a critical need: face masks.

As seamstresses, the pair got to work gathering fabric, lining and elastic bands, some of which were already on the premises. McMonagle's mom, however, donated most of the colorful cotton fabric. Meanwhile, employees took turns coming in to help in any way they could to assemble pieces and tie strings.

In the end, they made about 500 face masks, allowing employees to have at least one, maybe two, so they could launder them for different shifts. McMonagle and Bogacki also gathered plastic and other material to create about 50 face shields.

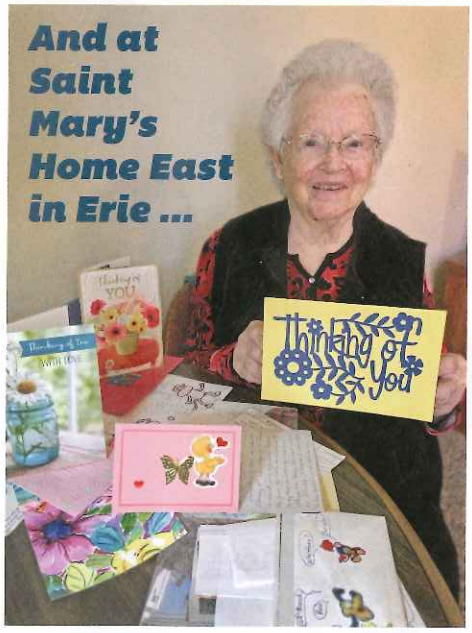
A member of Ss. Peter and Paul Parish in the nearby Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, McMonagle was inspired by the camaraderie and commitment of employees as they responded to the crisis.

"I've been activities director for 26 years and this has showed how the human spirit and human love is present in everyone when a need arises," McMonagle says.

Besides creating face masks and shields, though, Felton-Werner and the staff have been busy enforcing social distancing among residents. There are no more group activities and no visitors have been permitted for safety reasons.

Christ the King has purchased iPads so residents can chat remotely with their families. Also, ice cream social time and pizza parties are taken to individual rooms, instead of being offered in group settings. At Easter, Father Matias Quimno, chaplain, went room to room to bless each resident.

"I think Christ the King is doing everything right," McMonagle says. "When this [pandemic] is all over, we're going to look back and say, 'All is good.'" ✝



▲ Ninety-year-old Eileen Chapman, a resident of Erie's Saint Mary's Home East, has received greeting cards every day from friends and family who cannot visit during the coronavirus outbreak. Practicing strict social distancing, she says, "I try to keep moving. I do exercises and walk down the hallway. I don't get too close to people, but we wave! I just do my best like everyone else."