



# Whittier Union HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

*To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...*

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** April 27, 2020    **CONTACT:** Juliette Funes, William Diepenbrock    **PHONE:** 909-445-1001

## Whittier Union Teacher Uses 3D Printer to Create Ear Guards for Health Care Workers

**WHITTIER** – Whittier High School engineering teacher Steve Swanson is bringing a little comfort to the medical workers at PIH Health Whittier as they support the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Using 3D printers, Swanson, who is in his fifth year teaching at Whittier High, created over 300 ear guards for surgical masks and donated them to the hospital’s health care professionals this month.

“The technology we have for our engineering pathway provided the opportunity to create essential equipment for those on the front lines and I’m glad to contribute in any way I can,” Swanson said. “I hope this gives our students a glimpse into just how powerful engineering and 3D printing can be to the lives of others.”

Upon hearing that hospitals were seeking ear guards – which allow surgical face masks to wrap completely around the head and alleviate ear pain for health care professionals working long hours in full personal protective equipment (PPE) – Swanson sprang into action.

Equipped with two 3D printers, which Swanson was testing for classroom use prior to school dismissals, he found instructions online and began producing PPE equipment, including shields, masks and ear guards.

Swanson switched exclusively to producing ear guards – printed in Whittier High colors of red and white – after PIH expressed they would be useful.

Swanson has also turned his 3D-printed projects into a learning opportunity for students. Each week, he completes a project on functional household items, using the printers, and then shares them with students on [YouTube](#) and Google Classroom.

“During these uncertain times, Whittier Union teachers, staff and administrators have gone above and beyond to support the needs of our students and the greater Whittier community,” Superintendent Martin Plourde said. “We are proud to have educators like Steve Swanson, whose ingenuity and generous spirit provides inspiration to us all.”

### PHOTO CAPTIONS:

**042720\_WUHSD\_EARGUARDS1:** Whittier High School engineering teacher Steve Swanson created over 300 ear guards for surgical masks using a 3D printer and donated them to PIH Health Whittier in April.

**042720\_WUHSD\_EARGUARDS2:** Whittier High School engineering teacher Steve Swanson was testing two 3D printers for classroom use prior to school dismissals. Since then, Swanson has used his 3D-printed projects to teach students via YouTube. Here, he demonstrates nautical gears, which took three hours to make.

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**OUR MISSION:**

The Whittier Union High School District provides all students with an engaging, quality standards-based instructional program delivered by a well-trained staff resulting in improved student achievement. Whittier Union High School District works to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.

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