



KIRSTEN FAURIE | TIMES

Creating straight seams without the use of pins, Mora High School band teacher Anna Patenaude sews specialized masks.

MUSIC: Specialized masks keep Mora band in play

FROM PAGE 1

pandemic. While other school districts are canceling electives in the arts, Mora Public Schools music department is determined to keep making music a part of student lives.

Patenaude said while they could have focused on teaching music theory and history, they were determined to find a way to make music safely.

“Arts are not ‘extra.’ They are not ‘supplementary’ to education. Minnesota students deserve to have the arts in school,” she said. “The act of making music is good for the soul. It brings you joy and people need that right now.”

A study commissioned by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA) and a coalition of more than 125 performing arts organizations generated a set of results regarding how playing musical instruments spread airborne particles that can carry coronavirus, but also how to mitigate risks.

For bands, these recommendations include masking both the musician and the instrument itself. The study showed that when people play an instrument like a trumpet, droplets spread mostly by the person’s mouth and from the bell of the horn; few droplets escape through the keys of an

instrument.

Specialized masks were developed to block those droplets. Musicians masks are made with two panels of fabric that overlap but aren’t sewn together, creating a flap the player can insert their instrument’s mouthpiece through.

Specialized covers also fit over the bell of a trumpet or French horn that block those droplets.

The larger the instrument, the less risk. The study showed that for a large instrument like a tuba, by the time the air escapes a tuba, it has slowed down enough it spreads fewer droplets. The air traveling through a trumpet has less far to go and exits the horn much faster. Therefore, bell covers for a trumpet have multiple layers.

These specialized masks and bell covers are tedious to make and are in high demand as schools across the country have placed orders. Patenaude estimated the school will need approximately 350 masks for each band student in grades 5-12 to have one.

Double layered face masks with mouthpiece openings cost approximately \$10 each to buy online, and many orders are delayed. Prices are similar for the instrument’s bell covers. If the school needed to purchase them, the cost could be near \$7,000.

Patenaude is sewing masks for pennies on the dollar for what the school would have to purchase them for. While 350 masks and 350

bell covers seem like a tall order, Patenaude is fast. Very fast.

Patenaude has sewn elaborate costumes 20 or more chorus members of the school musicals. Over the last few years, she has developed the sewing and organizational skills needed to create many identical pieces. Patenaude’s skill set is saving the school district thousands of dollars: While her fabric costs are being paid for from the music department’s annual budget, she is donating her time.

On a good day, Patenaude estimated she could sew 100 of the masks in a day. In fact, her sewing machine quit before she did. It’s in the repair shop while she works on a borrowed machine.

“It has been a mad rush to get things ready,” she said.

Get ready to play music has been about more than fabric and thread — it’s also been about working with school administrators, Kanabec County Community Health and others to adjust schedules, routines and other practices to make music as safe as possible. Patenaude said those people have been forthcoming, considerate, encouraging and willing to help work toward a common goal.

“I wouldn’t be as excited to go back to school if I didn’t have as much trust and faith in the people who are making these decisions in my community,” she said.

“We are very lucky to be able to do what we are doing.”

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Last week’s most read stories

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Below are last week’s most read stories on the Kanabec County Times website, www.MoraMinn.com.

1. Ogilvie councilman, Kenneth Taylor dies after crash: Kenneth Taylor died as a result of his injuries on Wednesday, Aug. 26. A celebration of his life will be held 11 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 29, at the Ogilvie Fire Hall/Civic Center. Following the celebration, the Ogilvie Fire Department will give Taylor a final ride. All are welcome to follow. (2,364 pageviews)

2. Elderly moved amid virus outbreak: Over half of the residents at Eastwood Senior Living have tested positive for the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). Twelve of the facility’s 22 residents and five employees have tested positive for the virus in the last week. As yet, there have been no COVID-19-related deaths at the facility (2,200 pageviews)

3. Kanabec residents can apply for coronavirus relief: Kanabec County residents who have been negatively affected by the pandemic can apply for help. The Kanabec County Board of Commissioners has determined that a portion of the CARES Act funds that have been received shall be used to assist residents of Kanabec County who have been negatively impacted by COVID-19 and need assistance with housing, transportation, rent, mortgage and utility payments.

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Financial Focus

When Facing Illness, Take Control of Finances

By Edward Jones — Edward Jones Financial Advisor

In light of the coronavirus pandemic, virtually all of us have considered health-related issues. But for people facing a serious, chronic illness, such as Parkinson’s disease, multiple sclerosis, diabetes or cancer, health concerns are an everyday matter. If you’re fortunate, you may never be afflicted with such maladies, but the future is unpredictable. Of course, going through these health challenges bring physical and emotional concerns — but also financial ones. How can you prepare for them?

Essentially, you’ll need to consider four key areas: investments, insurance, legal arrangements and taxes. Let’s take a quick look at each of them:

• **Investments** — You’ll likely need to draw on your investments for at least some of the expenses associated with your illness. So, within your portfolio, you may want to establish a special fund devoted entirely to these costs, whether they be health care, modifications to your home, transportation and so on. A financial professional can help you choose investments for this fund, as well as make recommendations for your overall investment strategy, including techniques for boosting your income, such as adding investments that can provide an income stream that kicks in when you think your costs will rise.

• **Insurance** — Depending on your health status, you may be able to collect Medicare earlier than the traditional starting point at age 65. Even so, you’ll likely need to supplement it with additional coverage. But you may also want to look beyond health insurance. For example, you might be able to purchase a “chronic illness rider” that allows you to tap into life insurance benefits while you’re still alive. Or you might consider adding a “long-term care rider” to a life insurance policy; this rider offers financial benefits if you ever require daily care that you can’t provide for yourself. And some foundations, states and drug companies offer programs that can help pay for some costs that your insurance won’t cover.

• **Legal arrangements** — If you haven’t already done so, you may want to establish the legal documents most appropriate for your situation, such as a durable power of attorney for finances, which gives someone the authority to manage your financial affairs if you become temporarily incapacitated, possibly due to flare-ups of your chronic disease. Once you’ve recovered, you regain control of your financial decisions. You might also want to consider a health care proxy, which appoints an individual to make medical decisions for you if you can’t. In creating or revising these documents, you’ll need to consult with your legal professional.

• **Taxes** — You might qualify for Social Security disability payments, which, like other Social Security benefits, are taxable, so you’ll need to be aware of what you might owe. But you might also be eligible for some tax breaks related to your condition. If you still itemize tax deductions, you may be able to deduct some medical expenses, as well as certain home improvements, such as wheelchair ramps, bathtub grab bars, motorized stairlifts and so on. Your tax advisor may have suggestions appropriate for your situation.

Dealing with a chronic illness is never easy. But by considering how your illness will affect all aspects of your life, getting the help you need, and taking the right steps, you may be able to reduce the financial stress on you and your loved ones.



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