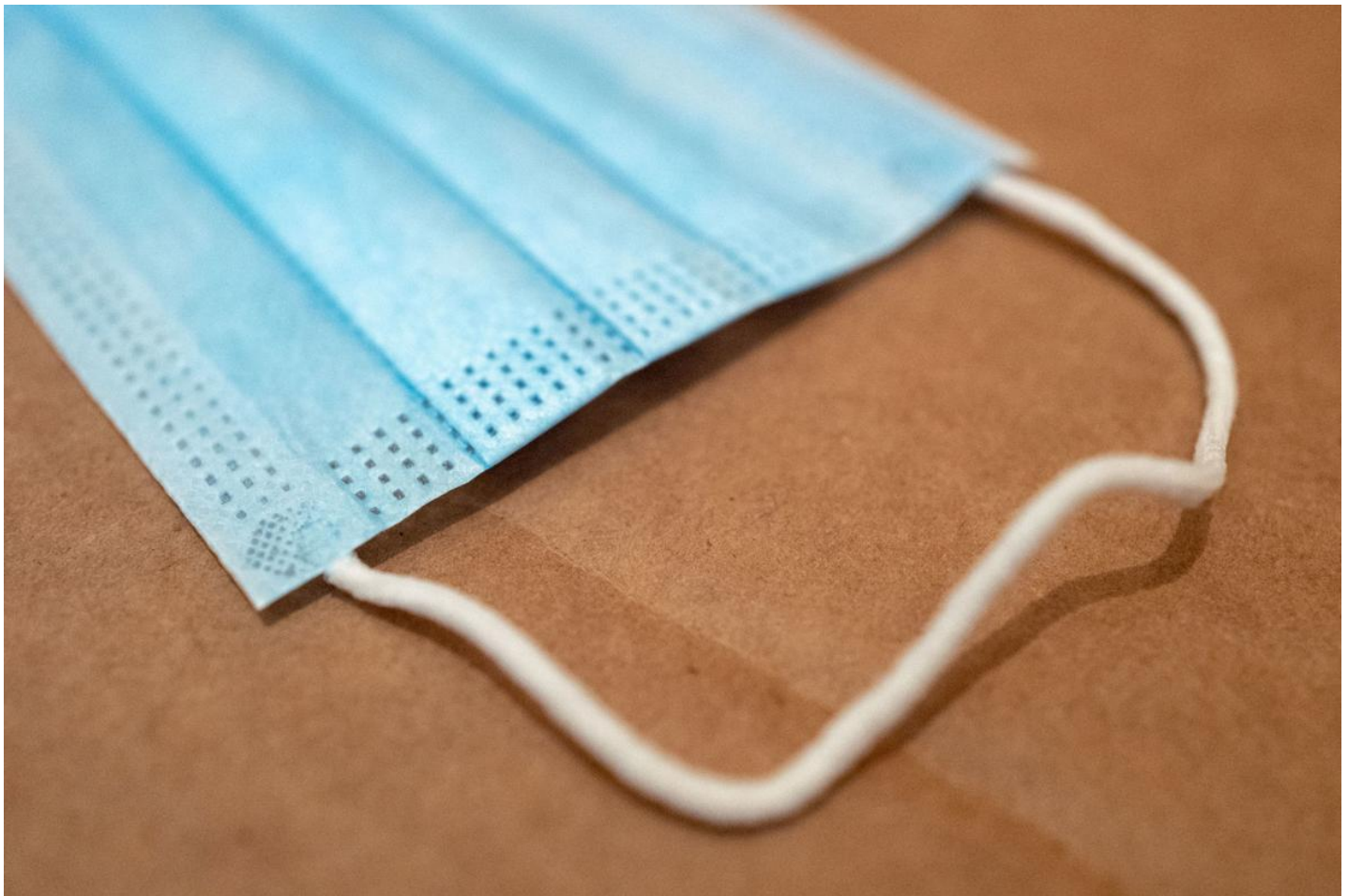https://www.ktbs.com/news/health/coronavirus/this-texas-teen-delivered-10-000-masks-to-medical-workers-shes-also-fighting-a-stigma/article_2cab6e02-8d84-11ea-a71b-c313da6d69b0.html

# This Texas teen delivered 10,000 masks to medical workers. She's also fighting a stigma

David Blank, CNN
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Detail view, close-up of blue color surgical mask with ear loops on cardboard surface, April 5, 2020. (Photo by Smith Collection/Gado/Getty Images)

Smith Collection/Gado

(CNN) -- Most ninth-grade girls worry about schoolwork, friends and crushes. Lately, however, Valerie Xu has focused on face masks.

The 15-year-old from Addison, Texas, says she wanted to do something about the lack of protective gear for medical workers during the coronavirus pandemic. She also wanted to combat stories stigmatizing Asian Americans for the outbreak.

So armed with resourcefulness and a teenager's urge to fit in, Xu raised donations, bought more than 10,000 protective masks and delivered them to a Dallas medical center. And she's gathering more.

## How she raised the donations

The donation drive started with a conversation Xu had with a family friend, a Florida ER doctor who was forced to wear the same protective mask for several days.

"This really amazed me in America," Xu told CNN. "We're supposed to be considered the richest country in the world, yet doctors and nurses fighting on the front line cannot get proper protection."

Since Xu wanted to make a local impact, she launched a GoFundMe to purchase masks for the UT Southwestern Medical Center, the largest facility near her home.

It has raised more than $3,800. Xu researched vendors in China and picked two suppliers, donating $1,200 of her own money to the cause.

She said her campaign so far has collected a total of 11,200 masks -- 10,000 surgical and 1,200 FFP2 masks, which are equivalent to N95 masks in the US.

## She also wanted to destigmatize Asian Americans

Xu hopes her project will not only help stop the virus but also lessen xenophobia directed at Asian Americans in the wake of the outbreak.

"Over the news, we see incidents of Asian Americans being assaulted on the streets or facing racial slurs," she said. "With this campaign, I hope to send a message that Asians like myself are standing along with health workers in our common goal to defeat this virus."

Xu, meanwhile, has received grateful messages from medical workers and others.

"If there is one thing that I have learned from this experience, it is that people care and are willing to help our community, which is the truth of our American spirit," she said.