



Faces behind the Masks

By Wes Eby, Global Representative

In this time of dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, masks have become a way of life for most people. In many locations, wearing masks is mandated by laws and strongly recommended by leaders in medicine and science.

As schools begin to reopen and accept students in classrooms, school leaders are requiring masks for both staff members and students. This requirement is a wise plan of action that certainly makes sense as school personnel take cautionary efforts to prevent the spread of this deadly virus.

A Problem at School

If teachers are wearing masks all day, will the students ever see their faces—more than their eyes? Will they see their teachers' pleasant expressions? Will they have a chance to be encouraged with smiles? The same questions could be asked about the students. Will the teachers have an opportunity to see their students' faces? To see and interpret their facial expressions?

Great questions that need to be explored for possible answers.

Possible Solution

Recently, I read about medical personnel in a hospital who have come up with a solution to those questions. I believe the solution would work in schools. Nurses and technicians, for example, wear masks as well as additional protective clothing while on the job. These medical personnel realized that the patients would never know the faces of people who cared for them. So they came up with a clever idea. They took photos of their faces and pinned or taped them to the front of their clothing.

The Process

Eureka! I thought. *Why can't teachers also do this?* The solution is a simple one for teachers and all school personnel.

- First, take photos of the students' faces and their own faces using a cell phone or a similar device. Encourage everyone to smile.
- Print the pictures on non-glossy paper, 4x6 inches or larger.
- Laminate photos so they can be easily sanitized.
- Tape or pin the portraits to the clothing or hang from a lanyard.
- Keep the photos at school, distributing them after the students arrive and collecting them at the end of the school day.

The result? A roomful of happy, smiling faces every day.

Sources:

- *Guideposts* magazine, August 2020 issue, page 10.
- Website: thehumanelementproject.com

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