

More than 1,000 air filters delivered to LA wildfire survivors

Grassroots volunteers use DIY Corsi-Rosenthal filters for disaster rapid response

By Megan Martin, ASU News
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As wildfires engulf large areas of Los Angeles, harmful particles and toxic gases from the smoke pose major respiratory health risks to Los Angeles residents.

For Liesl McConchie, a board member of the [Corsi-Rosenthal Foundation](#) and a San Diego resident, the fires and respiratory dangers were literally close to home, and she knew that rapid deployment of air filters would protect the health of thousands of at-risk Angelenos.

McConchie and her foundation colleagues, including [Megan Jehn](#) — epidemiologist and professor at Arizona State University's School of Human Evolution and Social Change — quickly designed a rapid response initiative to build and distribute DIY Corsi-Rosenthal air filters.

In the last two weeks, the foundation has built 1,150 air filters using \$30,000 in supplies and 1,000 MERV13 furnace filters donated by 3M, and raised almost \$10,000 from the public [through a campaign on its website](#).

DIY filters can be built cheaply and quickly from materials readily stocked by any hardware store (box fans, MERV13 furnace filters and duct tape), and the EPA recommends them as “a cost-effective approach to improving indoor air quality during wildfire smoke events.”

Jehn, who directs [ASU's Clean Indoor Air Project](#), is also part of a team of ASU researchers who [were awarded a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency](#) last year to enhance community wildfire smoke preparedness.

“Wildfires have increased in size and frequency in the Western U.S. due to our changing climate,” Jehn said. “We have simple tools available, including DIY air cleaners, that can be used to mitigate

the health impacts to these events in communities that are the most vulnerable to the challenges of wildfires and the accompanying air pollution hazards.”

Jehn has been assisting the Corsi-Rosenthal Foundation with planning and logistics to address the current air quality issues from wildfires for households, community buildings and evacuation centers in southern California.

Over two weekends, McConchie converted her San Diego backyard into a makeshift assembly line and enlisted her husband, her kids and 60 San Diego volunteers to assemble 650 air filters bound for LA.

“The last two weeks have been a total whirlwind,” McConchie said. “My house became a small factory, my kids helped me pack a 20-foot box truck to the brim, and I drove a truck around LA dropping off supplies to amazing people protecting their community.

“Working with these selfless volunteers and the wonderful community groups from hard-hit LA neighborhoods has been an exhausting but so rewarding experience; it’s been truly inspiring seeing so many people come together to help in this emergency.”

In parallel, the foundation supported Joaquín Beltrán, an advocate with the LA-based Action, Care, Equity Coalition, by donating materials to build another 500 air filters. Beltrán set up his own volunteer production line run out of a car dealership that provided space.

Through McConchie’s and Beltrán’s efforts, the 1,000-plus air filters were assembled and distributed to emergency shelters, senior care facilities, schools, neighborhood associations and vulnerable community members, all in the span of 12 days.

The Corsi-Rosenthal Foundation, founded by indoor environmental engineer Rich Corsi and air filter expert and manufacturer Jim Rosenthal, will continue contributing to the wildfire response, but focuses most of its grants program on providing air filters to schools, furthering public health by reducing students’ and teachers’ exposure to viruses, allergens and other harmful airborne particles.

“We’re glad that we were able to provide so many air filters to areas heavily impacted by wildfire in Los Angeles,” said Rosenthal, the foundation’s president. “In addition to providing these filters in this moment of crisis, we also want people to understand that cleaning indoor air is important, it has a direct connection to health, and affordable and effective solutions like Corsi-Rosenthal Boxes exist.”

Learn more about Jehn's air filter work

- • [New research: DIY air filters work better than commercial HEPA filters for fraction of cost](#)
 - • [ASU lab provides free filtration boxes to cooling centers across metro Phoenix](#)
 - • [ASU volunteers build DIY air filters to help Valley schools fight COVID-19](#)
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Main image



Volunteers load Corsi-Rosenthal boxes, a DIY air filter, to deliver to those impacted by wildfires in Los Angeles to assist residents in mitigating the impacts of the smoke in indoor environments. Photo courtesy of the Corsi-Rosenthal Foundation