

Jeliner Jordan, who used to work at former fashion giant Robert Hall Clothes as a tailor, has rediscovered her career in the age of COVID-19.

The 76-year-old resident of the Chicago Housing Authority's Zelda Ormes Apartments has made about 250 face masks for friends, family and fellow residents since the pandemic began.

It started simple enough, with Jordan making 20 masks for a nursing home through her church. They were so popular, she was asked to make 20 more. Then 20 more. Before long, word in her building got out, and now she's making masks for just about everybody she knows.

It's not only served the senior population at Zelda Ormes and the surrounding community, but also given Jordan a sense of purpose. She's busy now.



*Jeliner Jordan wears one of the 250 masks she has made since the onset of COVID-19*

"Oh yeah, I love to sew," Jordan said. "When I started making masks, I wasn't bored anymore."

Jordan has lived at Zelda Ormes for about 15 years. Besides her time at Robert Hall, where she did alterations, she also worked on the 18th district remembrance quilt for Chicago police officers. When she retired, she started doing free alterations at Zelda Ormes - and continues to do so. That has made her very well liked among her fellow residents.

"I wanted to thank you for the mask. I love it," one resident texted her. "And the Oscar for creativity goes to a Zelda Ormes genius, and her name is Jeliner Jordan, a true artisan!"

Another resident, Margaret Harris, received her mask recently from Jordan. She said Jordan is a very giving person.

"It's not unusual for her to do something like this," Harris said. "She is a very humanitarian person and I very much appreciate her and I'm sure a lot of people in this building feel the same."

The masks are made of cloth, and since elastic "is like gold" these days, Jordan improvised and began using pony-tail holders. The hard part isn't making the masks, she says. The hard part is obtaining the materials. Warehouses are closed and fabric is hard to come by.

She recently received burp cloth donations, as the masks have to be 100 percent cotton. She makes them, passes them out to resident and gives them to managers, service coordinators and office workers at Zelda Ormes.

In her own selfless way, Jordan downplays the service she is doing for her community.

"I love to do anything that has to do with sewing," she said. "It's not like its work."