**News Release**

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**New Orleans Based Automotive Paint Manufacturer Retools to Produce Hand Sanitizer to Donate To Area Hospitals**

NEW ORLEANS, LA- In an effort to help alleviate chronic shortages of Personal Protective Equipment for medical workers combating COVID-19, AutomotiveTouchup, a New Orleans based manufacturer of automobile paints and supplies, repurposed part of their production line to produce and then donate more than 900 units of hand sanitizer for hospital use at LCMC Health New Orleans.

“It was frustrating to go to the store and learn it was sold out of hand sanitizer,” explained Paul Fernandez, General Manager of Microfinish LLC, the producers of AutomotiveTouchup brand automobile paints and supplies. “I wanted my employees and others to have access to hand sanitizer, so we decided to do something about it.” Because the core of AutomotiveTouchup’s business is custom mixed touch-up paints released in small batches that are used nationwide, conversion to producing and packaging hand sanitizer in personal sized containers was a logical and quick goal for the company.

The hand sanitizer was produced by AutomotiveTouchup general manager Paul Fernandez and employee Wilbert Bee from a recipe published by The World Health Organization. Thurnau said that several hundred bottles appropriately sized for hand sanitizer were already on site at their facility, and they had ready access to the isopropyl alcohol and the skin conditioner glycerol called for in the WHO recipe. After gathering the needed staff and materials to manufacture and package the hand sanitizer, all that was left was to find a recipient to donate the product to. Through a mutual acquaintance of Fernandez and a senior administrator at LCMC Health New Orleans, over 50 gallons of hand sanitizer produced by AutomotiveTouchup and delivered by their employee Ronnie Fajardo quickly made its way to medical staff who needed it.

“I was actually shocked by and appreciated the fact that they were thinking of donating it,” said Scott Landry, senior vice president of facilities, LCMC Health Systems, New Orleans, who routed the majority of the hand sanitizer to Children’s Hospital. Landry said at the time they received the donation “we were actually in a situation where we were severely rationing those kinds of things”, including masks, hospital gowns and other needed Personal Protective Equipment. Landry explained that medical staff typically may use hand sanitizer up to five times per each patient examined, so with hundreds of patient contacts per day the need for the sanitizer donated by AutomotiveTouchup was clear. “Our employees are working really hard, and the little things you can do for them, like having a little personal dispenser that they can carry on their person, are really appreciated,” Landry said.

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Paul Fernandez, General Manager reiterated that he and his employees wanted to do something to help with the shortage of PPE like hand sanitizer the medical community fighting against COVID-19 is currently facing. He said: “These ingredients are on my list of chemicals we use or have access to through my regular suppliers, so I wanted to help. This is what we are here to do, to make small batches and pack up small bottles all day, so it was easy for us to help and important that we do so.”

Headquartered in New Orleans, AutomotiveTouchup is a division of Microfinish LLC, using their state-of-the-art facility to produce coatings for vehicular and industrial equipment repair and refinishing that are distributed throughout the United States.

LCMC Health System is composed of Children’s Hospital of New Orleans, Touro Infirmary, University Medical Center, New Orleans East Hospital and West Jefferson Medical Center.

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