Columbia Alumni Associations in Asia Offer Aid and Support

Spring/Summer 2020

This spring, as word spread that hospitals in the Northeast, including Columbia University Irving Medical Center and its affiliates, were experiencing a massive demand for personal protective equipment for doctors, nurses, and other personnel, members of Columbia’s vast Chinese alumni network quickly stepped forward to help.

More than a dozen alumni associations across Greater China, including the Columbia Alumni Associations
of Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, and Chengdu, came
together to donate millions of face masks and thousands of goggles, gloves, and
protective suits. Members of the Columbia Alumni Association in Taiwan also joined
the efforts, helping to source and ship cases of PDI Sani-Cloth AF3, a germicidal
disposable wipe that is in short supply. The alumni associations report that the
initiative has raised more than $2 million in cash and in-kind donations for hospitals
in New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts.

Amelia Alverson, executive vice president for University development and alumni
relations, notes that there were so many offers of help that her Irving Medical
Center colleagues were overwhelmed by the volume of e-mails. The response not
only demonstrated altruism, she says, but underscored the fact that “Columbia
alumni are always ready to help solve real-world challenges and engage on a global
level.”