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News Release

For Immediate Release

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BREATHE99 INTRODUCES SUPERIOR RESPIRATOR MASK FOR COVID-19 CRISIS WITH SUPPORT FROM PHILANTHROPIC COMMUNITY

MINNEAPOLIS (April 16, 2020)—In response to COVID-19 and after four years of design, Breathe99 today announces the launch of B2 Mask, a lightweight, reusable respirator that offers industrial-level protection for use in daily life. Not only does B2 Mask offer superior comfort and protection compared to competitors, its disposable filters can be manufactured quickly to meet crisis-level demand from both the health care system and the general public during a pandemic.

Current masks on the market suffer from two major problems, both of which are exacerbated in the COVID-19 crisis: (1) inadequate face seals and filters, and (2) inefficiencies in manufacturing.

B2 Mask addresses both of these problems. First, unlike disposable masks, the patent-pending B2 face piece flexes to fit each user's unique face shape, offering a higher level of comfort and protection. Moreover, B2 Mask uses the latest advances in filter material technology, providing 99% filtration of airborne particulates down to .1 micron in diameter, compared to 95% with N95 masks.

Second, the B2 face piece is constructed from durable, FDA-approved materials and can be easily cleaned for years of use. This means the only components of B2 Mask that require replacement with use are two small, high-efficiency filters. Not only does the reusable B2 face piece reduce waste in the environment, it removes wasted time, materials, and cost from the manufacturing process, all of which can be in especially short supply during a crisis.

Breathe99 is launching its Kickstarter campaign for B2 Mask today at 8 a.m. CDT. Members of the general public, who currently struggle to find high-quality masks in the market, can now back the campaign and receive a new B2 Mask this summer. The company is also offering a powerful "Give One, Get One" reward level for backers to first provide a B2 Mask to a frontline health care worker suffering from a shortage of masks and then later receive a B2 Mask of their own. You can explore the campaign at bit.ly/KickstartB2Mask

In the face of COVID-19, philanthropists are coming together behind Breathe99 to help accelerate B2 Mask to market. Venn Foundation (Venn) is providing Breathe99 with a generous, below-market-rate Program-Related Investment (PRI) loan, with initial anchor support of over \$100,000 provided by Bush Foundation, Damascus Road Partners, Morgan Family Foundation, The Xancharlize Fund, and an anonymous donor. The total PRI goal is \$300,000. Through Venn's innovative PRI crowdfunding model, any philanthropist anywhere can easily join Venn's PRI to Breathe99, and Bush Foundation is offering a matching incentive for new donors. Additionally, two Twin-Cities based companies, Protolabs and Worrell Design, have both directly supported the company by providing capital, expertise, and services.

"Given the severe shortage of personal protective equipment right now, B2 Mask is needed in our hospitals and homes as soon as possible," says Mark Steburg, Managing Partner of Damascus Road Partners, a national network of philanthropists who pool their charitable capital and invest together in social enterprises that sustainably address human suffering, "We urge others to join us in supporting Breathe99 through Venn's PRI and Kickstarter as the company quickly ramps up production."

continued

***Breathe99 Introduces Superior Respirator Mask for COVID-19 Crisis
with Support from Philanthropic Community***

B2 Mask is designed to comply with N99 standards from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH); however, the mask has yet to receive regulatory approval. The filter material used for B2 Mask is manufactured by and has been tested at Superior Felt & Filtration as well as Nelson Labs for particulate and viral filtration efficiencies (>99% removal). During the public health emergency announced in connection to the COVID-19 crisis, the FDA has officially declared it will not object to the use of non-FDA approved face masks due to shortages (<https://www.fda.gov/media/136449/download>). Still, Breathe99 plans to pursue Emergency Use Authorization through the FDA to help meet demand for protective products in healthcare settings.

About Breathe99

Breathe99 is a startup social business headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Its public benefit purpose is “to advance public health objectives, especially with under-resourced populations and in times of distress.” The company has been developing next-generation respiratory protection for over four years. www.breathe99.com

About Venn Foundation

Venn Foundation (Venn) is a Minnesota-based nonprofit public charity on a mission to unleash the full power of Program-Related Investments (PRIs) to achieve charitable impact. Venn’s vision is to create a new category of flexible, below-market-rate investment capital that can be directed creatively to projects and organizations across all sectors that are helping advance charitable goals. By opening a specialized donor-advised fund called a Venn Account, any individual or entity (including any business, private foundation, donor-advised fund, or public charity) can make and syndicate PRIs with their charitable donations. Any financial returns from these investments go back to participating Venn Accounts for donors to recommend redeployment into new PRIs or grants. www.vennfoundation.org



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