

2019 Brings smiles with BEEPING EGGS



Tony Versino (DAGER Technology), Maj. David Garvin (Canadian Army), and other volunteers make final touches during the 2019 DAGER Technology egg build

It's all about bringing smiles to children and giving back to the community for participants of the DAGER Technology Annual Beeping Egg Build, which supports visually impaired children through IABTI's Beeping Egg Charity – The Rachel Project. The Northern Virginia build has become an annual event for bomb squads, military personnel, and other emergency responders and was held this year on March 14th.

Major David Garvin of the Canadian Army and Liaison for the Joint Improvised-Threat Defeat Organization (JIDO) has been attending the Northern Virginia build for a couple years. While working the heat gun to secure the internal parts of the egg, he noted, "The beeping egg build is a great opportunity to donate time and effort anonymously to children who miss out on activities that we may take for granted. Time is the most valuable thing to give."

The Rachel Project began in 2005 when IABTI member David Hyché created a way for his daughter, Rachel, to participate in their local Easter egg hunt. The charity began with a local hunt for 11 blind/visually impaired children and has now expanded to hundreds all over the United States with the help of local volunteer events.

The Northern Virginia team build began in 2016 with just a few volunteers and produced a little over 100 eggs. As word spread, more individuals in the bomb squad and emergency responder community wanted to be a part of this special project to support blind/visually impaired children. The 2019 build was truly an international affair with over 40 volunteers from Canada, the UK, and Australia as well as local volunteers from organizations including the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense, National Counterterrorism Center, Army EOD, Air Force EOD, Loudoun County Police Bomb Squad, ATF Laboratory, Metro Transit Police Bomb Squad, Henrico County Police, and DAGER Technology.

The process required some volunteers to have soldering experience and know how to drill through a plastic egg without cracking it, as well as skills to help with shrink wrapping, quality control, and battery packaging and opening. "It's no secret that bomb technicians are great with electronics and have the soldering skills required to make the eggs. We're using the skills that we have and devoting time we have to helping people," stated Jeff David, Vice President of DAGER Technology.

In 2018, it took the volunteers less than two hours to construct 350 eggs. Group individuals decided that for 2019, the goal needed to be much higher and was set to build a whopping 600 eggs, the highest ever for a local build.

After two hours, all the egg shells and batteries, which were individually wrapped, had been opened and an entire box of completed eggs lay finished. The volunteers did not lose stamina. Incredibly, four and a half hours after starting the project, the group surpassed their build goal with 603 eggs completed. The completed eggs went to the Virginia Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) as well as IABTI to be dispersed across the country.

Reaching the goal of building 600 eggs was only a small part of the reward for those participating in the event. The main recompense is helping a child with vision difficulties and their family to participate in an "egg-citing" hunt and to put smiles on their faces. The DBVI Director of Services for Children and Youth, Caren Phipps, reported after their egg hunt, "As you can tell from the smiling faces of the children in the pictures, they love this activity and look forward to it every year. Additionally, it has the added benefit of allowing families to get together as they are often isolated as their child may be the only Vision Impaired/Blind child in their area. Thanks again for helping us make children smile!"



The team of volunteers worked together to build over 600 beeping eggs for blind/visually impaired children



Tom Lynch and John Clemmensen of DAGER Technology drill holes in the eggs



Captain Leif Sundberg of the Loudoun County Bomb Squad Office used his soldering skills to build the beeping eggs

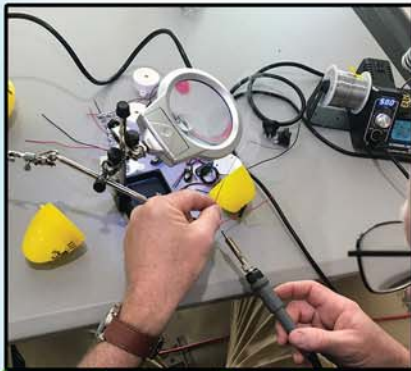
On behalf of all the individuals, families, and communities that will enjoy and benefit from these eggs, the IABTI recognizes and appreciates the generosity of all those who volunteered, and we say:

THANK YOU!

For more information or to set up a local event in support of IABTI's The Rachel Project, please visit www.iabti.org/charity, or contact your IABTI Regional Director.



Participants of the DBVI Easter Egg hunt stop to smile for the camera after finding an egg



Soldering wires for the beeping eggs



Loudoun County Police volunteers work together to build eggs



DIY tool bonus: A can koozie can be used as a disruptor breach protector! For more information or to submit DIY tools, contact Krysta.Zakrzewski@DAGERTechnology.com