



FRIENDS OF OSTOMATES WORLDWIDE – USA

ANNUAL REPORT

AUGUST 1, 2021 – JULY 31, 2022

(A Non-Profit Charitable Organization)

The mission of Friends of Ostomates Worldwide- USA (FOW-USA), a volunteer-run, non-profit organization, is to provide ostomy supplies and educational resources at no cost to ostomates in need around the world.

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Summary

With a global mission to provide ostomy supplies to ostomates in need around the world, FOW-USA continued to be impacted by the worldwide Coronavirus pandemic that began in January 2020. In February 2022, the invasion of Ukraine in a major escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian War that began in 2014 presented a challenge for much needed ostomy supply shipments. And yet, the highest number of shipments FOW-USA has ever achieved was recorded for this fiscal year! Last year, 167 shipments were completed and this year 175 were accomplished despite the challenging environment.

Shipping Ostomy Supplies Around the World

Efforts to assist Ukraine were received from many different sources. Because embargos prevented the delivery of pallets of supplies that would have normally gone through the established Astom-Ilko group in Ukraine, FOW Canada was able to help through an international shipping company and sent pallets through Poland, then to western Ukraine and ultimately to Kyiv. Ruth Salinger, Shipping Coordinator, contacted the European Ostomy Association President to offer ostomy supplies for any Ukrainian refugees in their country. Additional possibilities to facilitate the provision of supplies were explored and included an ostomy nurse with clinics in Ukraine; a colorectal surgeon from Ukraine making a trip home; an ostomy nurse able to transport supplies with a visit to Poland/Ukraine border; providing ostomy supplies through a group of Ukrainian American nuns who provide medical supplies and resources to Ukraine; and utilization of the group “Full Life” in Kyiv, Ukraine to receive donated supplies in Poland and deliver them to Ukraine.

Each year, the number of pounds of ostomy supplies shipped to countries with ostomates in desperate need of supplies has increased. 416,000 for FY2019, increasing in FY2020 to

444,500 to an all-time high of 471,000 for FY2021. This is made possible through the dedicated efforts of long-time FOW-USA Board members, Ruth Salinger who serves as Country Liaison; Dorothy Kent, Communications Director; warehouse volunteers, Mickey Heideman and Carol Heideman who coordinate the shipping process and Public Relations volunteers who communicate the need for supplies with newsletter articles, eblasts, Facebook and Instagram posts.

Some individuals who receive ostomy products email and share their comments. These heartfelt comments are published in our newsletters, on Facebook, Instagram and on our website.

Listed here are some remarks from our grateful recipients:

Morocco 2022 “Hello - We are so grateful for the donation of ostomy supplies that we received from « Friends of ostomates worldwide » Your gift helps us to support more people like BATOUL (in attached picture) to live a happy and healthy life. We couldn't do it without you. Together we are changing lives. From all of us thank you so much for your generosity. Asmae”

Mexico, April 2022 “Hope everything goes well. I want to confirm receipt of my shipment last March 17. Everything was received correctly packed and according to the list that you attached to me. I am eternally grateful with FOW - USA, for the support and the speed with which my request was dealt with. Best regards, Salvador”

April 2022 Dominican Republic “Hope you are well. This is a appreciation email, I on behalf of Ostomizados RD, [Dominican Republic] just wanted to thank you for all your help and dedication to ostomized patients all over the world. These are babies that we have been able to help for the last couple of months thank to your generous donations, without FOW USA some of them would still be using plastic bag taped to their skin. They are all under 5 years old ... Regards, Dr. Ramona Lappot, Ostomizados RD”

Continuing our Educational Mission

FOW-USA continues to support the education of doctors and nurses regarding the skin care of ostomates and the application of donated products. We renewed the annual grant of \$2000 to the Lions for Stoma Care Project managed by Dr. Carlo Pezcoller and his team.

Our website has a Resources link that includes updated information for health care professionals and individuals on ostomy management. We have a link to the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons, UOAA Nutrition Guide and UOAA New Ostomy Patient Guide.

To expand our educational mission, we instituted an Education Committee who will investigate new ways to provide resources for our clients.

Public Outreach

Social media has grown into a team effort. FOW-USA volunteers with specific expertise work with each of our media components Instagram, E-Blasts, Facebook and Newsletter. Instagram has increased to 291 followers thanks to the efforts of Board Member Ashley Mann. Ashley also manages the E-blasts and Bloomerang for FOW-USA. Heather Martinek continues to manage our Facebook page that has grown to 2,211 followers. Board Member Ginger Salvadalena has followed in the footsteps of former Board Member Stephanie Borellis to become editor of our Newsletter.

The Speaker's Bureau, an innovation created during the pandemic, has continued to flourish. Thanks to management by volunteer Dorothy Kent, 19 presentations have been accomplished by FOW-USA board volunteers at virtual support group meetings since May 2021 across the country with several more pending. These presentations help to bring awareness of our mission and facilitate donations of much needed ostomy supplies.

Our icon SpokesPouch which resides on our homepage highlights the latest events and a list of countries that received supplies the previous month.

FOW-USA distributes a Spring and Fall newsletter each year by mail and email. Newsletters are posted on the organization's website and can be downloaded, viewed and printed

by visitors to the site. We have grown our database to include over 7,600 households and more than 3,000 of these have an email address. We send about 4,600 newsletter and fundraising letters via USPS twice a year using the FOW-USA non-profit permit mailing with USPS.

FOW-USA Board members are actively involved in spreading the FOW-USA message to ostomy-related groups such as the Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nurses Society (WOCN) and the United Ostomy Associations of America (UOAA). Volunteers virtually staffed an exhibit booth at the national WOCNNext conference and will continue to be involved with national, regional, and local conferences through whatever means are available.

An ad promoting our mission and describing how to donate supplies is placed in the United Ostomy Associations of America magazine, Phoenix four times per year. Our website www.fowusa.org features a PowerPoint in both English and Spanish that presents the mission of FOW-USA.

Finances

FOW-USA managed the budget successfully in FY2021. Generous donations, grants and estate gifts on the revenue side have created a great income year. Fundraising and newsletter costs were over budget on the expense side due to the tremendous increase in the mailing list.

Governance

FOW-USA reviewed their By-laws and Policies and updated them to reflect current practice. A Warehouse Manual was initiated and will be modified as needed. The Nominating Committee identified and vetted new candidates who became members of our board. Several volunteers were recognized for their work in our warehouse, as part of our Speaker's Bureau, and for help in updating and translating our PowerPoint presentation. Our Strategic Plan was

reviewed, and it was noted that we have turned many of our “threats” to “opportunities”. The integrity and support of our Board Members has contributed to the viability of the organization.

Conclusion

FOW-USA remains committed to the mission of providing ostomy supplies and educational resources to those in need around the world.