



**FRIENDS OF
OSTOMATES
WORLDWIDE - USA**

Newsletter
Fall 2023

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

FOW-USA closed out Fiscal Year 2022/2023 at the beginning of August.

There are many achievements to recognize! The number of countries that received assistance increased from 99 to 101 with the addition of Yemen and Belarus. Recent updates to the website reflect an additional increase as we added Bangladesh as the 102nd country to receive supplies. In addition, 227 shipments of ostomy supplies, totaling 29,000 pounds, with a retail value of \$3 million were completed! None of these achievements would have been possible without the unwavering support and dedication of the volunteers at FOW-USA.

Our Board met virtually for our Annual Meeting recently. One of the highlights of the meeting was recognizing the winner of the Service Award. This award gives everyone on our Board an opportunity to honor a colleague for the time, personal sacrifices, and humanitarian support that they have given over the past two Fiscal Years. We congratulate Ashley Mann who was recognized for the many ways she has supported FOW-USA! Despite her own medical challenges, Ashley has enhanced the mission of FOW-USA with her commitment, skills, and novel approach to broadcasting our story. Read more about Ashley on page 4.

Our Board is interested in adding like-minded individuals to the organization. We have members of the Board who could use help today with their specific responsibilities. Some of this work can be done from home. We also need help in the warehouse located in Louisville, Kentucky. If you have skills in warehouse logistics, marketing, public relations, social media, fundraising, database management, and/or education, FOW-USA would like to talk with you!

Our organization meets every other month (virtually) and historically we have had one face-to-face meeting annually. (We have not done so since 2019 due to Covid.) For those who live near Louisville, Kentucky, consider volunteering in our warehouse! Volunteering just a few hours, or a day or two in the warehouse, can create a huge momentum that allows us to meet the challenges of providing supplies to ostomates who need our help. Please go to our website (www.fowusa.org) and select Contact Us to express your interest in being a warehouse volunteer or working with our Board.

Cindy Baufield

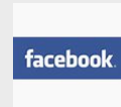
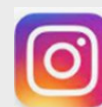
FOW-USA President



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Ostomy Pearls by Mackenzie Rauch-Pucher, DNP, RN, AGCNS-BC, CWOCN

Traveling with an Ostomy

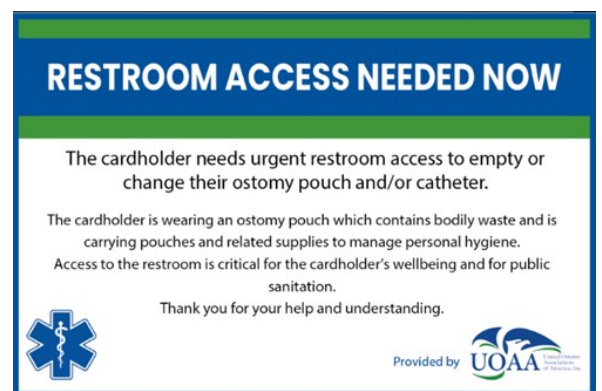
Adjusting to traveling with a new ostomy, or traveling for the first time with your ostomy, can be a daunting experience for many ostomates. However, there are many resources, tips, and tricks available to make your travel experience go as smoothly as possible. There is no reason that having an ostomy should stop you from traveling by train, plane, bus, or car.

Prior to your planned trip, make sure that you have obtained all of the ostomy supplies you'll need for the duration of your trip, and some extras just in case. You do not want to reach your destination and realize you will be short on supplies. When packing, use a specific travel bag or carrying case for your ostomy supplies to keep it separate from the rest of your travel items.

If traveling by plane, ensure you are complying with federal regulations. Your ostomy supplies should always be kept in your carry-on luggage for easy access. If traveling within the United States, scissors may be kept in your carry-on bag if the cutting edge of the scissors is no longer than 4 inches. If traveling internationally, check the rules for any countries you are traveling to and consider putting any scissors used for cutting your barrier in your checked baggage. If you use cut-to-fit barriers for your ostomy, consider precutting barriers before you leave for your trip so that you will not need your scissors during the plane ride. It is also suggested to carry a Transportation Security Administration (TSA) Travel Card (pictured below), which is available at www.ostomy.org through the United Ostomy Association of America (UOAA). This does not grant you access to skip any screening processes; however, it will notify TSA of your ostomy. They may still require that you go through a pat down or enhanced screening process, but these processes should be carried out with discretion and it is within your rights to ask that any personal screening be done in a private area. Always arrive to the airport two hours prior to a domestic flight and three hours prior to an international flight. This will leave plenty of time for the screening processes and allow time to empty your pouch before going through security.

Once on the plane, you can also obtain a restroom access communication card through the UOAA (pictured on the right). This should be used if bathroom access is restricted during the flight due to turbulence or other unforeseen circumstances. The flight attendants still must place passenger safety first, but it is best to make them aware and show them this card when boarding the flight so they can do their best to accommodate you.

When traveling outside of the United States, bring ostomy information and your list of supplies in the language of the country you're visiting. The European Ostomy Association has an online dictionary available on their website listing ostomy terms in 19 different languages. Follow safe water drinking practices to avoid getting sick. Drinking bottled water is usually safest. While it may seem overwhelming at first, traveling with an ostomy is common. With preparation and planning, nothing should hold you back.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT—JOY RHODES

Say “Hello” to our longest serving warehouse volunteer, Joy Rhodes! She began working at our warehouse in Louisville KY more than 20 years ago. Her husband, David, had an ostomy and belonged to the local ostomy support group and learned about the possible volunteer opportunity at a new ostomy supply warehouse in Louisville.



David and Joy were the first volunteer workers and were trained (briefly!) by the manager of the original warehouse in Ohio. Joy and David did whatever needed to be done: paperwork, unpacking and repackaging, and shipping, working all day on Mondays. Most volunteers had ostomies and understood the need.

When asked how the warehouse has changed over the years, Joy noted that there are many different products now and the process is much, much more organized. The warehouse was moved from Ohio to Chicago and then to Kentucky. When the Louisville site opened, we shared a small space in the building and there was no room for anything! She observed the warehouse operation has grown, with so many more requests and supplies coming in now. She remembers supply types were limited back then, with few accessories.

A former teacher, Joy has volunteered continuously all these 20+ years in her retirement. So what keeps this amazing person going? “Volunteering makes me feel good. I’m doing something good for people. I enjoy it and there is a great need. At my age of 86, it is also important for me to get out and stay active. It is a most rewarding feeling of doing something good for people who need it so badly. And I have met so many volunteers over these 20+ years and they are all wonderful people.”

Joy’s recommendation to potential volunteers is “Give it a try and once you get started, you will see how important your work is, and how wonderful the people are that you get to work with. We need you!”



WE GET EMAILS

“I attached some pictures of supply users. These people are not the only users. Some people are from outside of Addis Ababa city and we send the supplies through their families. Thanks for your unlimited support.

Best wishes, Bekele”

Ethiopia Ostomy Association 2023

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SERVICE AWARD WINNER

ASHLEY MANN

The Friends of Ostomates Worldwide-USA proudly announces that the 2023 Service Award has been presented to Ashley Mann. Ashley has taken over virtually all of our social media presence creating Instagram posts and Reels. She has suggested new ways to draw attention to our posts and gathered data. She has mastered our online database, develops innovative eblasts, and actively participates with the Public Relations Committee and as a member of the Speakers Bureau. She has developed creative content for our Facebook page and newsletters. Despite her medical challenges, Ashley has enhanced the mission of FOW-USA with her commitment, skills, and novel approaches to broadcasting our story.

Ashley Mann is a worthy recipient of this Service Award.

*Do you have an email address? Please let us know so we can reduce printing and mailing costs for the newsletter.
Notify us at: info@fowusa.org*

WE GET EMAILS



Saint Lucia Cancer Society
Lista Louis, Assistant (on the right)

“On behalf of Saint Lucia Cancer Society, we want to express our sincere appreciation and immense gratitude for providing the Society with Colostomy bags and accessory products over the past many years. Your contribution and support have been invaluable .

THANK YOU on behalf of so many patients and families.”



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JOURNEY TO THE UKRAINE

RACHEL HENDEE, PA-C

There have been many times in my life when there was a disaster in the world and I thought “I wish there was something more I could do.” So, when I was presented with the opportunity to go to Ukraine on a medical mission, I decided that this was something “more” that I could do.

The current Russian war in Ukraine has had devastating consequences. More than 6 million people have been evacuated or fled the country, cities and homes have been destroyed, families have been torn apart, not to mention the casualties on the front lines. The healthcare system in Ukraine has also been greatly affected. Patients have had many delays in care due to lack of personnel and/or supplies. Ostomates in Ukraine have also felt the burden of war. They may have had to flee unexpectedly from their homes and no longer have access to their supplies or they may not be able to access their healthcare team if they are having issues with their ostomy or appliance. Shipping routes have also been affected and most have shut down, making access to everyday goods and medical supplies difficult. FOW-USA has made great efforts in attempt to get ostomates in Ukraine the much needed supplies. We have been able to send supplies to Poland through some refugee organizations. However, we have not been able to directly ship to Ukraine due to the ongoing conflict.

I am a physician assistant working in colon and rectal surgery at Northwestern Hospital in Chicago, Illinois. I take care of many patients who have or may need an ostomy for a variety of different reasons. I also have a permanent ileostomy myself due to Crohn’s disease. A surgeon who I work with and who is originally from Ukraine started a charity called Pack the Plane to Ukraine in 2022 in response to the Russian invasion and conflict in his homeland. He organized a trip to Ukraine in July of 2023 where 4 surgeons and an ostomy nurse and I traveled to Ukraine to provide surgical care and a specific ostomy educational program for both patients and providers.

We saw a variety of ostomy patients during the week we spent in Kyiv, Ukraine, including many soldiers who had been wounded on the front lines of the war. Many of the patients spoke of difficulty in accessing adequate supplies since the war had started. One woman was using a plastic grocery bag until she could get more ostomy bags and another patient told me they had been trying to extend their wear time of each appliance to 10-14 days in order to stretch out their supply. Patients learned what they could or could not do with an ostomy and new tips and tricks they could try to troubleshoot some of their problems. We were inspired by these patients’ stories and the resiliency of the country and the Ukrainian people.

The ostomy supplies FOW-USA contributed to this mission were crucial. We were able to give so many patients much needed ostomy supplies and also able to leave both hospitals we visited with a large surplus of products to use with patients. The Ukrainian patients and medical providers were so appreciative of our efforts, and I want to make sure that the many supporters of FOW-USA know about the amazing impact their donations can have and that it truly makes a difference in the lives of so many ostomates all over the world.



WE GET EMAILS

Iran via Germany, June 2023

"We received the bags you sent for my uncle Jalil to an address in Germany, here in Iran. Jalil wanted me to send his thanks for you and your organization."

Nepal, September 2023

"Namaste and greetings! We have received 24 boxes of ostomy supplies. We greatly appreciate and are grateful for your continuous supply of bags and accessories. Your cooperation and collaboration are invaluable to us. Thank you once again for your generous support." Gita Kilambu ET nurse, Patan Hospital

Guatemala, April 2023

Thank you to Alejandro de la Riva ("Alex") for his tireless efforts to distribute donated ostomy supplies to the many members of his organization, Guatemala Ostomy Association (ASOGUA).



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ANNUAL MEETING SUMMARY

SHELLY MILLER, SECRETARY

The Friends of Ostomates Worldwide-USA board meeting took place via Zoom on Sunday, September 10, 2023. Hopefully this was our last “virtual” annual meeting as our goal is to begin meeting in Kentucky again next year. Cindy Barefield, our President, led the meeting and the group got right down to business. All committee chairs reviewed their reports during the morning session. The afternoon portion included announcing our 2022-2023 Service Award recipient (see article, page 4).

Additional meeting highlights included the discussion of how well our UPS Flat Rate Shipping program has been received. A very high percentage of the supply donations we are now receiving arrive through this program and we are definitely receiving more, much needed donations. We appreciate all of you who have sent supplies using this new program.

Read our complete 2022-2023 Annual Report at <https://www.fowusa.org/about-us/>

We truly miss the ability to gather in person as our afternoon was dedicated to our Strategic Planning session, led by board member Wendy Kunz, which we still were able to accomplish, but it’s so much better face to face. Also, by meeting in Louisville, we missed spending a day in the warehouse as we always look forward to that. One of our discussions led us to the question, how can we obtain more volunteers? We need additional help in the warehouse, and in a variety of areas on our Board.

Our plan is to return to an in-house meeting next fall, and enjoy the camaraderie we so miss. FOW-USA is open for business as usual, and accepting much needed supply and financial donations. We look forward to the upcoming year of serving our mission.

In fiscal year 2023, FOW-USA shipped 29,198 pounds of product to people in need around the world. We couldn't do it without your help!

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Or donate online at: www.fowusa.org