



FRIENDS OF OSTOMATES WORLDWIDE – USA

ANNUAL REPORT

AUGUST 1, 2022 – JULY 31, 2023

*(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.

## **Officers and Board of Directors (2022/2023)**

### **President**

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### **Warehouse Manager**

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### **Facebook Administrator**

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### **Google Administrator**

Nancy Schuller Brookfield, IL

### **Industry Advisors**

Heather Budorick Hollister

Rene Holland/Suzanne Lord ConvaTec

Marisa Steele Coloplast

## **Summary**

FOW-USA completed another successful year fulfilling its mission of providing ostomy supplies and educational materials to help ostomates in need around the world. In fiscal year 2022/2023 the number of countries who received assistance increased from 99 to 101 with the addition of Yemen and Belarus. (A list of all the countries where we have shipped product is available in the Power Point on the Resources Tab at our website [www.fowusa.org](http://www.fowusa.org).)

Flat Rate Shipping was introduced this year as another method to increase donations of supplies and this has been enthusiastically received. This program has allowed new donors as well as current supporters to donate supplies at increased levels. Several volunteers, working together at FOW -USA, help support the flat rate shipping program but credit for the idea and the unwavering resolve to make the program successful go to Mickey Heideman, FOW-USA Treasurer and Warehouse Volunteer. He spent countless hours establishing the program.

Revision of the forms on the Request Supplies Tab on the website has also helped to streamline the process of donation for both donor and recipient. Individuals or organizations are guided through the form to enter their request. FOW-USA warehouse volunteers receive the information and are better able to understand the needs of the recipient.

## **Shipping Ostomy Supplies Around the World**

In FY 2022/23, FOW-USA completed 227 shipments of ostomy supplies, totaling 29,000 pounds, with a retail value of \$3 million. At a shipping cost of \$98,000, the value of these shipments is priceless to the thousands of ostomates who received the supplies. Recipients of these donated supplies are truly grateful and many share their heartfelt thanks with FOW-USA in emails.

With their permission, their gracious words of thanks are published in our newsletters, on Facebook, Instagram and on our website. Here are a few remarks from recent recipients:

*Zimbabwe - September 2022*

*“During the reporting period, ILCOZIM received a total of 48 boxes of ostomy appliances from FOW USA and we managed to distribute 37 boxes to a total of 856 patients. The ongoing distribution of ostomy appliances, has greatly improved the health and living standards of Ostomates in Zimbabwe in a situation whereby many stoma operations are being done and the majority of the patients being unable to acquire the necessary ostomy appliances in the local markets, either the bags are unavailable or expensive. As Covid 19 was a world pandemic, most stoma organizations in Africa, pharmacies and hospitals did not have adequate stocks of stoma supplies, we got so many requests from other neighboring countries for assistances with bags especially from South Africa, Zambia and Namibia. ILCO Zimbabwe was well stocked with ostomy appliances though as the pandemic period stretched, we started running out on the most basic ostomy appliances needed and as more emergency surgeries were being done the more the stocks became less and less.”*

*Kenya – October 2022*

*I want to express my gratitude for your quick response to my request. I received the supplies yesterday and I highly appreciate it. Thanks to you and your colleagues, the package arrived safely and timely. It was delivered right at my door step at no cost. I am really grateful. May God bless you all.*

*Dominican Republic January 2023*

*One month after the donation arrived at customs and overcoming obstacles, thank God we already received the materials, which we will proceed to deliver to the patients. We take the opportunity to thank the FOW and yourself and your team of volunteers for such a huge gesture of love with the ostomized of the Dominican Republic. Thank you! Lic. Leocadia and Luis Pérez*

*Uganda January, 2023*

*As always am very grateful for the supplies you send me...they sustain my life. As always, thank you! Eva*

## **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.

Education Committee made extensive updates to the Education tab on FOW-USA website. Resource includes American College of Surgeons Ostomy Educational Videos, Salts

Healthcare and UCI Health for Colostomy, Ileostomy and Urostomy videos as well as a Nutrition Guide video.

## **Public Outreach**

Distribution of a Spring and Fall Newsletter each year by mail and email continue. Color printing is an update for the newsletter as well as for the ad in the Phoenix magazine. Database continues to grow with an additional 1,000 households added since last year to bring the current total to 8,666. Of this number, about 3,000 have an email address.

Ruth Salinger, Shipping Coordinator for FOW-USA had an article published in the Spring 2023 Phoenix magazine. Ruth described her personal journey of having an ostomy and the gifts she received by being freed from ulcerative colitis including not only the ability to engage in activities but also becoming involved in FOW-USA and the honor of helping ostomates in need around the world.

Speaker's Bureau continues to provide virtual FOW-USA presentations and some in-person ones to affiliate support groups across the nation. These presentations help to bring awareness of our mission and facilitate donations of much needed ostomy supplies.

Communication with UOAA and Affiliated Support Groups was also enhanced with our sign on to the letter supporting Ostomy Awareness Day 2022.

FOW-USA President served on the Conference Planning Committee for National UOAA Conference held in August 2023. FOW volunteers represented the organization at the National WOCNext Conference in Las Vegas in June and at the National UOAA Conference in August.

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. In addition to this, we ran a full-page color ad rolling out the UPS Flat Rate Shipping Program in 2023.

Our website [www.fowusa.org](http://www.fowusa.org) features a PowerPoint in both English and Spanish that presents the mission of FOW-USA.

## **Finances**

Options for donations on the website were expanded to include the ability to initiate recurring monthly donations. FOW-USA managed the budget effectively in FY2022/2023. Generous donations and donors who made required minimum distribution transfers from their IRAs helped to offset necessary expenses to support growth of the organization.

## **Governance**

With an all-volunteer board and no salaried staff, FOW-USA provides an excellent opportunity for interested individuals to serve the ostomy community. Annually, the Nominating Committee completes a vetting process for candidates who propose service to our board. 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.