FALL 2026

FRIENDS OF OSTOMATES WORLDWIDE - USA

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JANICE COLWELL, APRN, CWOCN, FAAN

As I reflect on the past six months, I am proud of the remarkable progress Friends of Ostomates Worldwide - USA has made and grateful for the dedication of our board members, volunteers and supporters. Together, we have strengthened our foundation, expanded our reach, and advanced our mission in meaningful ways. A significant accomplishment has been the addition of three board members who bring diverse perspectives, experiences, and expertise to our leadership team. Please take some time to read the article in this newsletter that will introduce you to our new members. They have each joined a committee and have started participating in our important work. Many thanks to Secretary, Shelly Miller, for organizing and presenting a board orientation program for volunteers.

We are also excited to have established a new collaboration with the Global Colon Cancer Association (GCCA). The GCCA is a nonprofit organization that advocates for equitable access to colorectal cancer screening. They work to promote access to quality screenings, testing, treatment and care, as well as provide educational resources and foster global collaboration. The Global Colon Cancer Association has members who need ostomy supplies and we are working together to meet that need. We are working on the process of getting ostomy equipment to those who currently don't routinely have access to this vital resource. Look for more information in the future on this exciting collaboration.

Our visibility and engagement have grown substantially through our social media platforms. Thanks to the creativity and dedication of our Public Relations Committee members (Shelly Miller (chair), Sharese Donaldson, Ari Summerfield, Ashley Mann, Ann Favreau and Ruth Salinger), we have expanded our online presence, reached new audiences, and strengthened connections within our community. Their efforts have helped amplify our message and increase awareness of our programs and initiatives.

I would also like to recognize the outstanding contributions of our Treasurer, Andy Pucher, whose leadership extends far beyond financial stewardship. In addition to maintaining our strong financial position, Andy has expertly managed our Google Workspace administration, ensuring that our board and committees have the tools, systems, and support needed to operate efficiently and effectively.



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President's Message Continued....

Our warehouse board of directors, Carol and Mickey Heidemen, continue to receive and ship supplies, managing donations and our database, working with Ruth Salinger to get ostomy products to the people in need of help in managing their ostomy. Carol and Mickey also coordinate a group of volunteers who come to the warehouse weekly to sort product, pack donations, and keep the warehouse in tip-top shape.

Our Vice President, Ann Favreau, has helped to develop, and continues to work on, Fundraising activities to allow us to continue shipping ostomy products and support the warehouse. Fundraising has become even more important as shipping costs have dramatically increased in cost. She is also my sounding board for problem solving; an invaluable skill that I so appreciate.

Patty Willaert is responsible for communicating via our information line where she provides donors with solutions to the questions they may have. Rachel Handee has represented us as a board member in Ukraine where she participated in caring for people with ostomies and paved a way for FOW-USA to get supplies to this area. She also is a member of our fundraising committee. Craig Glazer has been instrumental in seeking out several collaborations and helping us to look forward to preparing FOW-USA for our future. Mackenzie Rauch-Pucher coordinates our educational outreach which has resulted in many online presentations to ostomy groups and interested parties.

We have several volunteers who have taken on tasks that have helped us in many ways, they include: Maimurna Haruna, Maria Pekarick, and Tammy Halloway. Many thanks to this group of volunteers.

As a supporter of FOW-USA you might think, "what can I do"? As always, we need supplies to have at our warehouse as the requests come in. Please send ostomy supplies that you no longer can use. Please consider financial donations of any amount to help us with the increasingly high costs of transportation; donation information: **https://www.fowusa.org/donate/**

These accomplishments reflect the power of collaboration and the commitment of individuals who generously give their time and talents to our organization. What a great Board of Directors.



Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our success. Together, we are making a difference, and I am excited about what we will achieve in the coming year.

Janice C. Colwell
APRN, CWOCN, FAAN

Jan Colwell, APRN, CWOCN, FAAN
President
Friends of Ostomates Worldwide - USA

Letters From Friends: Chile



2026 Chile CORAOS V REGION

Dear FOW-USA,

On Monday the 17th of this month, we carried out the "Opening of Donation Boxes 2026, sent by FOW USA."

We are extremely grateful once again for your cooperation, which involves a tremendous amount of work and immense dedication from you and your team.

Warm regards,

Gloria, President,
Chile CORAOS V REGION

Make Your Financial Donations Work for YOU: by Shelly Miller

Our mission at FOW-USA can only be sustained by two types of donations; supplies for us to send to ostomates in need and financial donations to sustain our warehouse space and pay for the shipping of supplies to our recipients.

There are many ways you can support our mission financially!
Bequest – add FOW-USA to your Will;
Stocks/Appreciated Assets;
IRAs, RMDs, QCDs;
Charitable Gift Annuities (CGAs);
Donor Advised Funds (DAFs);
Employer Matching Programs.

The bottom line is we can't do it without BOTH types of donations and depending on your situation, some of these could be of benefit to YOU, the donor!

We also have a program where you can make financial donations in Honor of a special event and in Memorium as well as make repeated monthly donations. Checks, credit cards, PayPal. All are accepted.

Check with your financial advisor for YOUR best options.
And click here to go to our **financial donation page** on our website.



Ostomy Pearls: Examining Your Stoma and Peristomal Skin

By Jan Colwell, President of FOW-USA

Whether your ostomy is new or you have had a stoma for a while now, you may need to adjust your routine over time. Bodies change and stomas can change as well.

One of the most important parts of ostomy care is protecting the skin around your stoma. While pouch changing can become routine, be sure to slow down and look at both your stoma and the area around the stoma, called the peristomal skin. Gently clean the peristomal area with warm water and take time to be a detective. Note any redness, any open areas, and if present ask was this caused by leakage? Is it itchy which could indicate a fungal infection (common in warm moist environments)? This may mean a consultation with your ostomy nurse is needed. While the pouching system is off, sit up and bend forward and see what the shape of the skin looks like when sitting. Are there wrinkles or folds around the peristomal skin, were they there at your last change? Uneven peristomal skin can cause leakage and you may need to be sure your skin barrier shape matches the skin shape in a sitting position. Remember there are flat skin barriers and convex skin barriers. The type you use depends upon the shape of the skin around the stoma. The skin around your stoma can change over time so reconsidering your skin barrier fit is important. To learn more about the fit of your pouching system check out these links:

Choosing a Skin Barrier

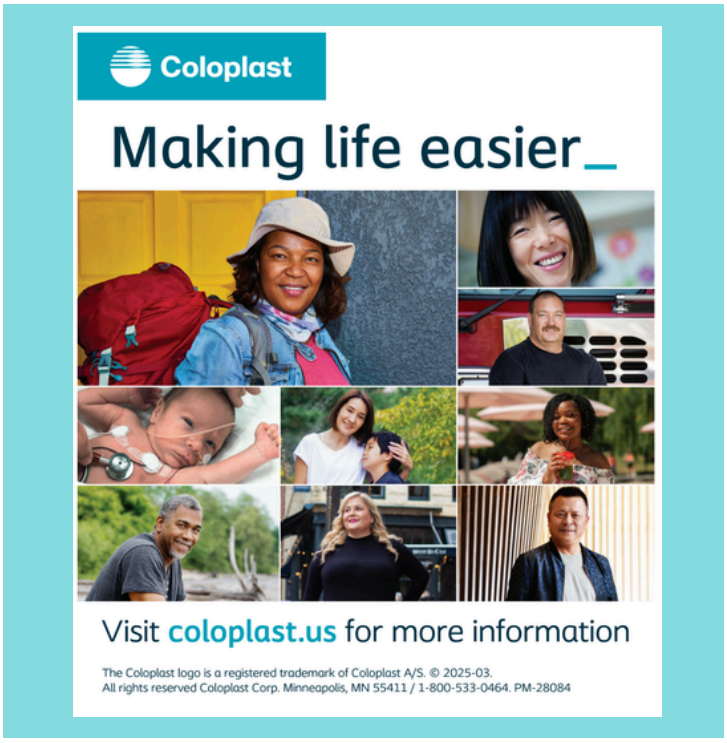
Ostomy Self Assessment Tools

Guide to Ostomy Products

Take a look at the stoma. Is there anything new from your last change?

Where is the opening in the stoma? A flat skin barrier may not accommodate a stoma with an opening on the side or a stoma with minimal protrusion. Consider the above websites to assess the shape of the best skin barrier matched to your stoma and peristomal skin shape. Any changes in the appearance of your stoma should be shared with your health care team. Make sure the opening in the skin barrier fits snugly around your stoma to help stool or urine from contacting the skin which can cause leakage and peristomal skin irritation.

While you may want to change your pouch quickly to prevent leakage from the stoma, take some time to be a stoma detective to prevent problems with your pouch seal, peristomal skin and/or your stoma.



UOAA President Interview: Justus Anderson

Interview By Ari' Summerfield



Good morning Justus, thank you so much for meeting with us today. Can you tell our readers about when you first got your ostomy and what that experience was like for you?

My ostomy experience began like many other ostomates' stories—with pain, discomfort, inconvenience, and embarrassment. In 2018, I underwent radiation treatment for prostate cancer, and the resulting internal damage began my journey into the ostomy world. I couldn't wait to get it! I hoped I would finally be able to stop mapping out available restrooms for every adventure beyond our front gate. I received my loop ileostomy and suprapubic catheter on December 26, 2018, with the hope of restoring everything to its original configuration after six months of healing. After a whirlwind couple of days in the hospital and a crash course in ostomy care, I was released into the wild with an ostomy starter-kit folder and more questions than answers. It was terrifying, and I couldn't remember why I had thought it was a good idea!

What was the most pivotal moment for you as an ostomate?

My pivotal moment came when I walked into my first ostomy support group meeting. I expected a room full of miserable people complaining about their lives and their ostomies. Instead, I found laughter and happy, energetic people moving forward and thriving. That was the moment I began to heal.

How did you find your local ostomy support group meeting and what inspired you to get more involved?

When I was discharged from the hospital, I received a folder full of paperwork, including a flyer for the local ostomy support group. After several weeks of struggling, my wife insisted that we attend a meeting. The encouragement and support I received from her and the group pulled me out of my slump. Later, when the members asked me to lead the group, I accepted. I was surrounded by amazing, inspiring people who were thriving. How could I refuse?

You manage a community closet for ostomy supplies. Tell us how you got started and a little about the impact it has had on your community.

I originally purchased my supplies from a local medical supply store. The owner was caring, kind, and empathetic, and she accepted and distributed surplus supplies. When she had to close the store and move away to care for family, I couldn't bear the thought of those supplies going to waste. Through my support group affiliation, word spread that I had begun accepting and distributing supplies. Since then I have met so many wonderful people eager to donate and so many others who desperately need supplies that I can't imagine not doing this work.

> " I found laughter and happy, energetic people moving forward and thriving."

Congratulations on your recent appointment as president of UOAA! Can you share with our readers how you got involved in UOAA and your vision for the coming year?

As the leader of our local support group, I decided to attend the 2023 UOAA National Conference in Houston. There, I met and became friends with many wonderful people and witnessed the great work being done by the organization. At the 2025 national conference in Orlando, I met more UOAA leaders and members and was asked if I would consider running for president-elect. Shortly afterward, I was honored and humbled to be elected, eventually following the natural progression into the presidency. My vision is to continue the outstanding service that this organization has provided over the years while expanding our digital footprint and upgrading our customer relationship management system.

"Let your ostomy do it's job while you continue to thrive!"

I also intend to expand our young ostomates program, build solid partnerships with other ostomy-related organizations, and reach out to even more ostomates and their caretakers.



What impact do you feel FOW-USA has made locally, environmentally, and globally?

I believe FOW-USA is making a tremendous impact locally and globally. Locally, it helps keep valuable ostomy supplies out of landfills and warms the hearts of donors. The organization also gives those who manage community closets an efficient way to pass along supplies that are not needed locally. FOW-USA's generous global distribution certainly helps allay ostomates' anxiety in developing nations. This organization's work benefits us all.



Do you see opportunities for FOW-USA and UOAA to collaborate in the future? If so, what might that look like?

I believe UOAA and FOW-USA can work hand in hand to rescue surplus supplies from disposal and put them to use on a global scale. UOAA can be the conduit to direct supplies to FOW-USA for prompt, meaningful distribution. We are all working toward the same goal—supporting ostomates—and there is strength in numbers.

Pictured Left: Justus Anderson representing UOAA as president.

Pictured Above (from left to right): Sharese Donaldson (FOW-USA Board Member), Jeanine Gleba (UOAA Director of Advocacy), Justus Anderson (UOAA President), and Ari' Summerfield (FOW-USA Board Member) together at the WOCNext Conference, Indianapolis IN, June 2026.

Finally, if you could say anything to a brand-new ostomate, what would it be?

Find a support group as soon as possible. Get involved, make friends, help others, and enjoy life. After investing so much time, money, and effort—and enduring so much pain—to save your life, don't let that life go to waste. Let your ostomy do it's job while you continue to thrive!



Justus and his wife live in the Colorado Springs area where he leads his local ostomy support group, pictured here.

Letters From Friends: The Philippines



Dear Friends of Ostomate Worldwide,
Warm greetings!

On behalf of our family, I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for your generous donation of medical supplies. Your kindness and support mean so much to us, especially during times when these essential supplies are greatly needed.

Thank you for being a wonderful source of support to the ostomy community. May you continue to touch the lives of many people through your kindness and generosity.

With heartfelt thanks and appreciation,
Alexard

Get involved: Welcoming Our Three New Directors!

Sofia Figueroa



Sofia Figueroa is a lifelong resident of Illinois. She has been a nurse for about twenty years; working in the ICU, internal medicine and home health. During her time as an ICU nurse, she developed a passion for wounds and ostomies, eventually getting her Wound & Ostomy Nurse (CWON) certification. In her 15 years as a CWON she has been very passionate and committed to improving the quality of life for the ostomates she cares for as a nurse practitioner. In her role she provides direct care to ostomates and colorectal patients. During her professional career, she has been the chair of a system wide wound and ostomy board, developed educational programs for health care providers, run an ostomy support group and has spoken at local hospital symposiums. She is committed to promoting education, and making sure that every ostomate feels informed, and supported.

Outside of work, she enjoys spending time with her family and 2 dogs, reading and traveling.



Dennis Clark



Dennis Clark has been a volunteer in our Louisville, Kentucky warehouse for over a year. He is a fellow ostomate. Dennis has been married to his wife, Dorothy, for 50 years, and they have three daughters and ten grandchildren. They have called Louisville home for the past 40 years and have enjoyed being active members of the community. His commitment to public service includes serving on the Murray Hill City Council and completing a term as Mayor of Murray Hill.

He earned a degree in Marketing from Southeast Missouri State University. His professional career began in sales with Keebler Cookies & Crackers before spending 17 years with General Electric Lighting Division. For the final 29 years of his career, he was self-employed as a manufacturer's representative, working with customers and suppliers across a broad range of industrial components used in finished products. Throughout his career, he focused on building long-term relationships, solving customer challenges, and supporting the success of both clients and manufacturing partners. We are confident he will bring a lot of his business and organizational skills to our warehouse operations.

Paban Banjade



Paban Banjade is a humanitarian leader, entrepreneur, and student currently living in Maryland with his wife and two children. Over the past several years, he has dedicated his life to improving the health and dignity of ostomy patients. As the founder of FOW-NEPAL and BABSON NEPAL, he developed a deep, hands-on partnership with (FOW-USA) and possesses a unique, end-to-end knowledge of what we do.

Having worked every single type of job for FOW-NEPAL, he knows the exact uses, handling, and technical details of all the ostomy equipment and materials that we supply. His work has brought him face-to-face with the realities of patient care, having directly supported almost 1,100 people who rely on these vital ostomy supplies. A HUGE skill that Paban brings is that he is intimately familiar with the complex logistics side of this work, including the exact processes required to clear overseas cargo and navigate international shipping networks to get supplies safely to those in need. We look forward to him joining our Shipping Committee network.

There's not a lazy bone in his body! He and his wife work together at a local restaurant, and operate a local rideshare business. These roles have reinforced his strong work ethic, time management skills, and dedication to community service.

He possesses a foundational knowledge of computers and is currently a student at the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC). His long-term academic goal is to study Artificial Intelligence (AI). He plans to use this expertise to modernize and optimize humanitarian cargo networks, ensuring medical supplies are distributed globally with maximum efficiency.

We are excited to welcome Paban and trust his background helps transform our shipping efficiencies for years to come.

More Letters From Friends:

Ethiopia

Dear FOW-USA Team,

I hope this message finds you all in good health and high spirits.

I would like to express my deepest and most heartfelt gratitude to you and your entire team for your extraordinary kindness and generosity in sending the medical assistance.

Living with a medical condition that requires colostomy bags has been a significant challenge, and obtaining these essential supplies has often been difficult. Your willingness to help has brought me immense relief, renewed hope, and encouragement during a very challenging period of my life.

Your compassion, dedication, and selfless commitment to helping those in need are truly inspiring. Although we have never met in person, your kindness has reached across borders and touched my life in a profound way. Your support is much more than a donation of medical supplies—it is a gift of hope, dignity, and the opportunity to live with greater comfort and confidence.

Please extend my sincere appreciation to every member of your team who contributed to making this assistance possible. Their generosity and hard work are making a real and lasting difference in my life, and I will always be grateful for their efforts.

Once again, thank you from the bottom of my heart for your generosity, compassion, and unwavering support. Your kindness will never be forgotten.

With sincere gratitude and warmest regards,

Mekonnen

Solidarity Bridge

Thank you for your gift! Our patients often express gratitude and renewed hope when they receive support to restore their health. With your donation of a pallet of Ostomy supplies on 4/1/2026 you are partnering with a community of health workers committed to caring for the most precarious patients and bridging the gap in access to care for all.

Your generosity supports medical professionals in Bolivia and Paraguay who are saving lives and alleviating disability for hundreds of patients each year. Together we are making lifesaving care accessible to people who face immense barriers. Your donation is an important contribution to these efforts.

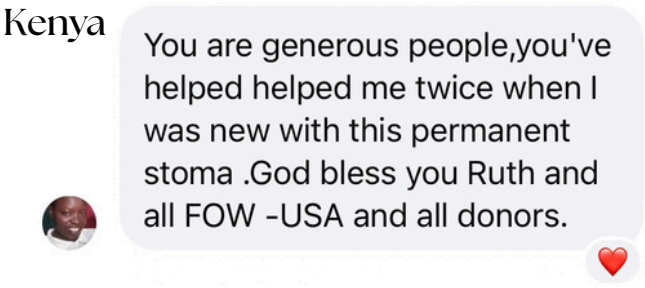
Thank you for your faith in our vision for a healthier future.

Gratefully,

Martha Huffman
Director of Operations

Solidarity Bridge is a non-profit founded in 1999, is focused on year-round medical programs in Bolivia and Paraguay that provide care to the underserved via partnerships with local doctors.

Kenya





News and Events:

The Global Colorectal Congress:

This year FOW-USA began an exciting new partnership with the Global Colorectal Cancer Alliance. We are excited to share that you can register for their global Congress, a two day, international event focused on advancing colorectal cancer advocacy. Registration includes live sessions as well as on-demand recordings available after the Congress. If you are interested please click the link below to register.



Youth Rally 2026 Update & 2027 Details!

The Youth Rally's mission is to provide an environment for adolescents living with conditions of the bowel and bladder that encourages self-confidence and independent living. This year Youth Rally hosted 125 campers ages 11-17 from all over the United States and beyond in Bolder CO. Youth Rally 2027 will take place from July 11-17 in St Louis, MO! Check out **youthrally.org** to learn more and register as a camper or volunteer.

FOW-USA Around Town!

This summer and fall some of our board members attended conferences and local events to get the word out about the amazing work of FOW-USA. A huge thanks to everyone who stopped by our booth to learn more or just say hi! Another big thanks to a few friends who requested fliers to pass out at conferences we were unable to attend in person, we appreciate you spreading the word! If YOU would like to invite FOW-USA to your conference or request fliers to pass out please email us at info@fowusa.org.



Pictured above in top Image (Left to Right): Ari' Summerfield, Jan Colwell, Heather Budorick, Sharese Donaldson at WOCNext in Indianaoplis June 2026
Middle Image: Ari' Summerfield at the Midwest Region of the WOCN's Winds of Change Conference Sept 2026
Bottom Image: Downers Grove, IL. Run for Resilience October 2026

YOUR SUPPORT CROSSES BORDERS

from our warehouse to the world — your support travels far

CLICK HERE TO DONATE

FOW-USA Financials & Annual Budget are available upon request. For Shipping History go to fowusa.org

Thank you for reading!

Connect with us on social!

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