

Discounted Ostomy Supplies

Ostomates in the U.S. have a resource for affordable supplies

On September 5, 2005, Stephanie Sullivan became an ostomate. She had been through multiple surgeries, yet bowel diversion was the most challenging for her to accept. A friend recommended the Jupiter Ostomy Support Group (JOSG), which is an affiliate of the UOAA. The JOSG was so vital to her physical and emotional recovery that within seven months she became its president.

Shirley Brown, a new member of the JOSG needed ostomy supplies, but she was uninsured and could not afford them. She had exhausted every "free" local resource that she could find and JOSG was not able to meet her needs. That's when Judy Bower, the vice president, brought Stephanie an article from the Phoenix Magazine about a small organization that offered ostomy supplies to the uninsured.

Stephanie soon discovered the organization was Osto Group and run by two retired ostomates from their garage in California. Barbara, the wife of one of the retirees, answered the phone and assisted Stephanie in obtaining the supplies for Shirley.

Barbara asked Stephanie if she knew of anyone who wanted a small ostomy business – Osto Group. It was important that Osto Group was passed onto someone who would really care for it and make it grow. It was also their desire that an ostomate be at the helm.

Stephanie and her two cherished friends and business partners, Marian Grace and Barbara Hymans, already had a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization called Wholeness House. They agreed Osto Group would be an excellent addition and it moved from California to Florida in May of 2008.

In Florida, Osto Group has grown from a small, donated space to a rented 15,000 square foot warehouse in West Palm Beach able to service well over 6,000 ostomates all in the United States.

Osto Group receives donations from all around the country: support groups, hospitals, hospices, humanitarian organizations, medical supply companies, pharmacies and individuals. Once the items are inventoried, they are offered to the uninsured, to those whose insurance does not cover their supplies and those who have insurance with high deductibles (\$750 or above for individual policyholders and \$1,500 or higher for family policyholders).



Barbara Hymans (left) and Stephanie Sullivan of the nonprofit Osto Group that offers affordable ostomy supplies to those in the U.S. without insurance or adequate coverage.

Ostomates can order their supplies online by using Osto Group's website: www.ostogroup.org or by calling 877-678-6690. All the ostomates pay is a small handling fee and postage.

With the future of the insurance industry more unstable than ever likely creating an increase in demand, it is vital that Osto Group keep pace. Osto Group needs support groups and individuals to send ostomy supplies so they can help those around the country who desperately need them. The number of ostomates in need is growing exponentially! Many who call either have no supplies at all and are using duct tape and plastic bags or are on their last pouch, which has been on for 10 or more days! So, please consider helping Osto Group so we can help them!

For every member of a support group who qualifies for Osto Group's program, that member will pay only a 10% handling fee on their first three orders! All the member needs to do is let the Osto Group volunteer know that they are with a support group and are responding to this call for help!

Won't YOU help Osto Group help all those in need? Please donate your supplies and know that you are helping many of your fellow ostomates around the country. Send those donations to:

Osto Group
3500 45th Street
Suite 16A
West Palm Beach, FL 33407