Q. Tell us about yourself, Kathleen:
A. I am a dual citizen of Canada and the USA. I lived in various states and finished my education at the University of Texas, receiving my masters degree in Nurse Anesthesia. I worked for 5 years at the Methodist Hospital and Baylor College of Medicine. I met my husband there who was from Canada and finishing his fellowship in Vascular Surgery.

Q. When did you move to Florida?
A. We moved to Canada and I worked and raised 3 children. They are now all living in Toronto and I have 3 young grandchildren.

We bought a condo on Singer Island in 2008, and we have spent some of our winters here. I have volunteered in Hospice in Toronto for 10 years.

Q. How did you find Osto Group?
A. When I started to spend more time in Florida, I found the Osto Group from a volunteer website for this area. I chose this organization because I was diagnosed with colon cancer in 1999 and live with an ostomy now. I practice colonic irrigation instead of having an external appliance.

Q. How do you like volunteering at Osto Group?
I am thoroughly enjoying working with Marian and Barbara several days a week at their location in West Palm Beach.

Q. What are your duties?
A. I am responsible for receiving the donation, organizing the contents, and preparing them for redistribution to needy people who have no insurance or limited resources to afford these valuable medical supplies. I am so happy I get to “go to work and volunteer” several days a week and escape the harsh Canadian winters. Anyone finding this organization would be very lucky!
Q. **You are one of our more unique volunteers in that you proudly proclaim you are 81 years young and still going strong. Tell us more.**

A. I am originally from Washington State & was an office nurse for 20 yrs. Also I am a Navy veteran. I have two daughters, five grandkids and five great grandkids still living there. In 1989 my husband Bernie and I moved onto our 37-ft sailboat, Quest. In 1994 we left Washington on our boat. It took us 2 1/2 years to reach Key West, taking our time. We spent two winters in North Palm Beach marinas & loved the area. In 2000 we became Captain and crew on a 60-ft sailboat for seven years and saw half the world. (We sold Quest).

Q. **When did you move to Palm Beach County?**

A. In 2007 we moved into our Palm Beach Gardens condo & live here full time.

Q. **What kind of duties do you do for Osto Group?**

A. I go to the warehouse 2-3 mornings a week and always look forward to it. I really enjoy sorting into categories medical supplies and now I am learning about preparing ostomy supplies for redistribution to those in need.

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Q. **Why do you volunteer?**

A. Well, for several years I volunteered to the local Salvation Army. I was a volunteer for a short while at The Gardens Hospital. I needed more to do than read, sew, hike and plan dinner and I like giving my help where I can. So after a lull of not volunteering, I started researching what interested me and saw your ad needing someone with a medical background. I love learning new things and I have lots to learn about ostomies. Also the staff is A-plus and the other volunteers are fun to be with.

Q. **Would you recommend volunteering to others?**

A. If I hear of anyone that talks about volunteering, I encourage them to DO IT.

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Volunteer June Francis

Osto Group News March 2022

Ostomy supplies on our new shelves.  

Shelves of donated ostomy supplies.
Volunteer Rich Wetendorf

The transformation of Osto Group’s operation and return to efficiency is well underway. One reason Osto Group has come so far in a relatively small amount of time is Rich Wetendorf. Rich has been very key in this oftentimes strenuous endeavor. Standing over 6' 5" tall he is a big man with a big heart.

Some people like taking it easy in retirement. Not he and his best friend/wife, Lauren. They came to Osto Group as active volunteers in our community of Palm Beach County just over one year ago.

Rich had ostomy surgery in 2020. When he learned about Osto Group and our mission of reaching out to ostomates without insurance, he immediately inquired about volunteering. Giving help to Osto Group is his way of helping others who have been impacted by ostomy surgery by helping us to improve our operation, which in turn helps us to reach out to more people.

Rich has an amazing gift of organization that compliments his strength and other abilities. His servant’s heart is obvious as we often hear him whistling while he works as he turns mess and mayhem into a thing of beauty. We are so thankful for the Wetendorfs. They would be the first to tell you ultimately it’s the Light of Christ they hope others will see in their selfless good works.

Volunteer Lauren Wetendorf

As the wife of an ostomate Lauren came to us with a heart for the work we do, because her husband had ostomy surgery in 2020. Her desire to help others who have ostomies was the draw that brought her to our organization. Her upbeat personality and charismatic nature never fails to brighten our day.

One of Osto Group’s biggest challenges is the training of new volunteers, because there are over 2,000 different ostomy items in our warehouse. Learning to sort and repack the donations can involve a steep learning curve for some. Not so with Lauren. Her husband’s surgery had taught her many things about the supplies. The fact that her two children include a medical doctor and a biomedical researcher didn’t hurt either regarding her medical knowledge. Needless to say she took to the work instantly and has become a very valuable asset to our operation.

Always faithful, Rich and Lauren volunteer weekly and have been here for the better part of a year. We are so grateful to have them both as a part of our team.
Other Treasured Volunteers:

Gail McGovern

Shufen Striedter

Anita Prinz & Rocky

Even the staff of Osto Group are volunteers: (from L to R) Barbara Hymans, Stephanie Sullivan and Marian Grace.

Thank you for your Gift!!

____Check Enclosed

I would like to contribute to:

____Shelving

____Where most needed.

____Other

Please charge $___________ to my credit card.

___Master Card ___Visa ___Discover

Account #:________________________________________

Exp. Date: ______________  CIV: ______

Name on card:____________________________________

Signature:________________________________________

Donations may also be made online at ostogroup.org or by calling 877-678-6690. All contributions are tax deductible.