

The Promise

APRIL 2021

...OF A RETURN TO A NORMAL LIFE



NEWSLETTER OF THE MIAMI OSTOMY AFTERCARE PROGRAM

GOODBYE

We are sad to announce that Miami Ostomy Aftercare Program, Inc. will cease operation of all of our programs due to the impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

I am proud to have achieved many of our original goals in the past four-and-a-half years. It is through the generosity of others that we were able to achieve some significant milestones:

My sincere thanks go to my friend Stephen H. Cypen, President of the Jerome A. Yavitz Charitable Foundation, Inc. for providing the primary funding for the nonprofit since 2016.

Thanks also to the expert pro bono services of Holland & Knight LLP, pledged on January 4, 2017, to assist with the organization's IRS Application Form 1023. Miami Ostomy Aftercare Services, Inc. was recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization on March 8, 2017. This was an amazingly fast achievement. Now donors could deduct contributions under IRS Section 170.

My fellow Board members and officers, Vice President Ana M. Restrepo and Secretary Robert Seaman, shared their skills and years of expertise for Miami Ostomy Aftercare Program's benefit. Our loyal cadre of professionals have provided exemplary staff support and we could not have achieved our successes without the contributions of Maria Batalla, Suzanne Bernstein, Mary Lou Boyer, Christopher Criscuolo, Claudio Croce, Sue Gale, Andrew Hoo, Susan Neuman, Michael Skop, Michele Stefanelli, and the late Robin Robinson.

I am proud to have achieved many of our original goals in the past four-and-a-half years and to have created awareness of one of the biggest problems for a person with an ostomy, the lack of adequate ostomy aftercare.

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Support Group Meetings

Are Cancelled, Effective Immediately.

Reports, Photos, PowerPoint Presentations, Videos (where available) of past Support Group meetings are posted on the Miami Ostomy Aftercare Program, Inc., website.

www.miamiostomyaftercare.org

KEEP THE WEBSITE ALIVE

Donations are requested to help keep the website online for ostomy patients, caregivers and nurses to utilize and refer to for patient needs.

• **Donations can be sent electronically** online from the website:

www.miamiostomyaftercare.org
(less the small transaction fee charged by PayPal)

• **Donations can be sent by check** payable to:

Miami Ostomy Aftercare Program, Inc.
555 N.E. 15 Street, Box 2-L
Miami, FL 33132

NOTE:

All donations of \$250 or more will receive a letter of acceptance from Miami Ostomy Aftercare Program, Inc., for tax deduction purposes by the donor.



Miami Ostomy Aftercare Program, Inc. is a Florida not-for-profit corporation recognized by the IRS under section 501(c)(3) for tax deductible donations.

1. Through the establishment and leadership of our Vice President Ana Restrepo, RN, BSN, CWON, we contracted with the Wound, Ostomy, and Continence Nurses Society for their Ostomy Care Associate course. This nationally recognized program provides online and hands-on ostomy care training for nursing professionals to improve knowledge and skills in ostomy care. These nurses can only begin help fill the great void in hospitals and home care agencies for staff that can provide knowledgeable, appropriate ostomy care for patients post-operatively in the hospital and at home in order for them to learn self-care.
2. We developed and maintain a very comprehensive website with video demonstrations, written information and instructions as well as resources with website links for further information.
3. An Ostomy support group, open to ostomy patients, caregivers, healthcare professionals and anyone interested in ostomies, was created. Each regularly scheduled meeting provided quality presentations and an opportunity to meet others going through similar situations and learn more about ostomy care and proper use of equipment.
4. We maintained a phone "Help Line", manned by a WOC Nurse, to assist nurses and patients with specific questions and concerns about ostomy care problems as well as provide a referral service to ostomy surgery patients with specific needs.

I am pleased to report that we have achieved success in these areas of our program; some more successful than others. What we lack is ongoing, adequate funding.

When the Corona Virus Pandemic hit in late 2019, none of us could have foreseen the long, lasting effect it would have on our nonprofit or the entire community. Yavitz Foundation, like many other Foundations, re-directed and funneled their funding to hospitals which were in dire financial straits. Our last quarterly donation from the Yavitz Foundation was February 5, 2020. We have survived on lesser donations and by tightening our expenditures for a little over a year, hoping that the pandemic will end, and that charitable foundations will open up again to giving to the nonprofits serving the people in our community. Our recent review of the situation shows that is not happening yet.

Therefore, we are forced to cease operating our programs. The nurse training programs, the Ostomy Care Associate (OCA) classes for this spring are cancelled, the free Teaching the Teachers program for Home Health Care nurses is no longer being offered. The monthly Support Group meetings with speakers and nurses available for specific questions from attendees was transitioned from in person meetings to Zoom meetings. The WOC Nurse manned free-to-callers HELP line is closed. This is the Goodbye newsletter.

We will maintain instructive videos and information on the website with the remaining funds and any donations received over the website, to continue to provide some resources for new ostomy patients, nurses, and their caregivers.

If another funding source becomes available, we can revisit the closure of the programs but for now there

appears to be no avenue for continuing.

It saddens me to say Goodbye. Our dedicated staff and volunteers have been so generous with their time and talent. There are no adequate words to express how much all are appreciated. Creating the awareness of the severity of the problem of the great lack of aftercare provided to the patient has been accomplished, recognition of the seriousness of the problem requires the pooling of the efforts of the largest and most important Ostomy national programs must take place to provide aftercare help to the post-surgical ostomate immediately after he or she has been released from the hospital. There are some immediate things that can be provided by those associations and agencies that would provide the ostomate with necessary help. We would be pleased to share what we have learned about dealing with this problem, after four years of experience in working on it, if asked.

The main thing that has become very clear throughout this whole process is that there is so little help available for new ostomy patients as they try to adjust to their new way of life. I found this at the very beginning of my journey and even with all that the Miami Ostomy Aftercare Program has done; the lack of nurses knowledgeable in ostomy care still exists today. In fact this journey has opened my eyes to see that it is very widespread, not just local. I invite you, as I always will, to encourage nurses and nursing students to see how rewarding ostomy care nursing can be.

Now to all I say **Thank You!**

Hal Spaet

Harold W. (Hal) Spaet
PRESIDENT