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CANADA'S VOICE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH AN OSTOMY

# ostomy canada CONNECTS

FALL  
2023

## Raising Ostomy Awareness in Canada *Breaking Down Stigmas & Celebrating Triumphs*

Stigmas that surround any medical condition can be incredibly harmful. Not only do they create feelings of isolation and shame, but they also discourage individuals from seeking care and support. The same can be said for the stigma surrounding ostomy surgery. These operations have the potential to significantly improve a person's overall health and quality of life, yet many are hesitant to undergo the procedure and talk openly about their experience. Let's explore the importance of raising awareness for ostomies and how it can empower individuals and unite the community.


Living with an ostomy can be challenging, requiring an individual to adjust to a new normal. Managing the appliance and navigating daily activities can take time and patience. However, with the proper support, individuals with ostomies can lead full and meaningful lives. This is why breaking down the stigmas associated with ostomies and educating others about the procedure and its benefits is crucial. Of equal importance is the Ostomy Canada Society who is dedicated to all people with an ostomy, helping them to live life to the fullest.

Ostomy Canada's "Step Up For Ostomy" fundraising initiative is an excellent example of raising awareness for ostomies. The event draws people from across the country to participate, all while raising awareness and funds to support those living with ostomies.

The society also shines a light on **Ostomy Trailblazers** like Jean-Pierre Lapointe, and Joel Jacobson, who have shared their experiences and offered encouragement.

Another incredible advocate for raising ostomy awareness is **Linz Kemble, the Summer Kickoff Contest Winner** (top left). She modeled for the photoshoot in Calgary and shared her story on social media, inspiring others and encouraging them to break the silence around ostomies. By showing that life with an ostomy is possible, individuals like Linz are potent motivators for others struggling or hesitant to seek help.

Finally, the upcoming short film "**Stuck**" is a significant step towards raising ostomy awareness and reducing the shame and embarrassment associated with the procedure. The film highlights the story of an aspiring musician who ultimately regains hope after undergoing ostomy surgery. The movie is set to inspire individuals to share their stories, seek help, and live their best lives.

Raising awareness for ostomies is crucial in helping to break down the stigmas. With open communication, understanding, and support, we can create a space that celebrates triumphs and empowers persons living with an ostomy. So, let's continue to fundraise, share our stories, support each other, and prove that it is possible to live life to the fullest with an ostomy! 

*It's time to step up for ostomy awareness in Canada!*



# NEWS & NOTES |

With Dana  
Ypma



## **Ostomy Canada Society is thrilled to share some bits and pieces of news and updates.**

As the autumn leaves begin to fall and the air grows crisper, I wanted to take a moment to connect with all of you, our dedicated and resilient

members. Your unwavering support and the sense of togetherness within our community continue to inspire us.

Canadians have been Stepping Up For Ostomy, from local awareness fundraising events to our Unsung Hero and Maple Leaf Award recipients to trailblazers in the community. Ostomy awareness is essential to our mission, and we can't do this without the community's help. Be sure to read our recap of our national Ostomy Awareness Day on September 23, Step Up For Ostomy, and learn how you can take action.

Also crucial to our mission is to provide support and knowledge. We are here to serve you. You'll find valuable information, personal stories, and resources to help you on your ostomy journey this season. Whether you're looking for tips on managing your ostomy or seeking inspiration from the experiences of fellow members, we've got you covered.

If you have any suggestions or ideas for content you'd like to see in future issues, please don't hesitate to share them with us. Your input is invaluable.

As we enter this new season, let's embrace the changes it brings, both in nature and our lives. Remember that you're never alone on your journey, and our community stands with you every step of the way.

Thank you for being a part of Ostomy Canada and for your contributions to our supportive family. Wishing you a wonderful and cozy autumn. ○

**Dana Ypma**  
Executive Director  
Ostomy Canada Society

## **Our National Office is Expanding!**

"I'm happy to introduce myself as the newest member of the Ostomy Canada team, beginning November 24. My name is Wilma Kohler, and I bring with me over 15 years of experience in Office Management and Accounting.

I am deeply passionate about providing consistent leadership and administrative support to organizations. I take pride in my ability to adapt to new procedures and technology. I am always eager to share my knowledge with the team and am open to suggestions to make processes smoother.

In addition to my professional expertise, you'll find that I embrace life with a profound love for its limitless possibilities, which resonates perfectly with Ostomy Canada's vision. I believe in the vision of living life to the fullest, cherishing every moment, and embracing the journey with positivity and enthusiasm". - **Wilma**



wilma.kohler@ostomycanada.ca



**Wilma Kohler**  
Office Manager  
& Accountant

**WELCOME TO OSTOMY CANADA | We're happy to have you!**



# OSTOMY CANADA MAGAZINE

## Goes Digital



Dear Valued Subscribers,

We are thrilled to announce a significant change that will bring more convenience, accessibility, fiscal responsibility, and environmental consciousness to Ostomy Canada Magazine. Starting with our next issue, Ostomy Canada Magazine will transition from print to a digital format.

This transition is part of our commitment to embracing the digital age while maintaining fiscal responsibility and better serving our readers. We believe this change will provide you with several benefits:

**Instant Access:** You will be able to access Ostomy Canada Magazine from any digital device, including smartphones, tablets, and computers. No more waiting for mail delivery!

**Enhanced Interactivity:** The digital format will allow for interactive features such as clickable links, videos, and more, making your reading experience more engaging and informative.

**Eco-Friendly:** By going digital, we are taking a step towards reducing paper waste and minimizing our environmental impact, which also aligns with our commitment to fiscal responsibility by cutting down on production and distribution costs.

**Cost Savings:** This transition will help us allocate more resources to the content and quality of the magazine while reducing operational costs. This fiscal responsibility will allow us to continue delivering valuable information to our community.

### Here's how you can ensure a smooth transition:

- 1. Update Your Contact Information:** Please make sure your email address on file is up-to-date. We will use the email address we have on file to send you a link to access each new issue.
- 2. Check Your Spam Folder:** To ensure you receive our emails, please add our email address (e.g., [info1@ostomycanada.ca](mailto:info1@ostomycanada.ca)) to your email contacts or safe senders list. Also, be sure to check your spam folder if you don't see our email in your inbox.
- 3. Enjoy and Share:** Once the digital magazine is available, we encourage you to read, share, and discuss the articles with fellow subscribers and the ostomy community.

We are excited about this change, and we believe that it will enhance your Ostomy Canada Magazine experience. By making this transition to digital, we demonstrate our commitment to fiscal responsibility, ensuring that our resources are used efficiently and effectively.

Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to providing you with informative and engaging content in our new digital format, all while upholding our dedication to fiscal responsibility.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to our technical support team at [support@ostomycanada.ca](mailto:support@ostomycanada.ca).

Thank you for being a part of the Ostomy Canada Magazine community, and we look forward to embarking on this digital journey together. ○

**Dana Ypma, Executive Director**  
Ostomy Canada Society

**Lisa Gausman, Editor-in-Chief**  
Ostomy Canada Magazine



# OSTOMY AWARENESS

# Canada Steps Up!

## Step Up For Ostomy - A National Awareness Campaign

Step Up For Ostomy is an annual awareness and fundraising event in support of the Ostomy Canada Society and its mission. On September 23, 2023, people living with an ostomy across Canada participated in a national Ostomy Awareness Day. This campaign will support our outreach, education, advocacy, and program development for the estimated 135,000 affected by an ostomy in Canada.

## Meet Our Summer Kickoff Contest Winner, Linz Kemble

The Step Up For Ostomy campaign started with our Summer Kickoff Contest. Our only winner of a \$100 Amazon gift card is Linz Kemble (right). She is a young adult living with an ileostomy and is a member of Calgary Ostomy. She was diagnosed with a rare disease called (Sessile) Serrated Polyposis Syndrome. This caused innumerable polyps in her large bowel, some being pre-cancerous, so surgeons removed her entire colon. Thanks to Linz for participating in this contest as well as the Ostomy Photoshoot in Calgary. Read more about Linz's story on her JustGiving profile.



## Canada Stepped Up For Ostomy This Year!

We can't thank our affiliated Chapters and Peer Support Groups enough for their participation in the Step Up For Ostomy. Public awareness is essential to our cause; this year, it was bigger and better than ever. Several groups held awareness walks that drew many new participants.

With so many Canadians needing to reconnect with local support, these groups made enormous steps in community outreach. A big shout out to:

**Vancouver United Ostomy Association** held its annual awareness walk at LaFarge Lake. They raised \$230 in a collection jar for Ostomy Canada.

**Calgary Ostomy Society** raised \$3,355.00. About 60 people participated in their awareness walk, seated yoga session, Ostomy Expo, and BBQ. They also held an Ostomy Photoshoot with Sean Currie, so look

for those lovely new faces on our website and media.

**Regina & District Ostomy Association** held a successful awareness walk and yoga session, with over 45 donors and \$6200 raised.

**Moncton & District Ostomy Association** promoted their awareness walk through a local radio station, raising \$2,660. They provided Step Up branded t-shirts to participants for the first time.

Chapters and Peer Support Groups also had options to support the campaign, such as online fundraising via JustGiving or becoming a national sponsor instead of a live event. We are

grateful to the following groups for supporting this important cause:

**Halifax Ostomy Society** created a fundraising team via Just Giving, which raised \$4,660.00.

**South West Nova Scotia Ostomy Peer Support Group** became a Silver Sponsor.

**Ottawa Ostomy Support Group** raised \$200.



## Step Up For Ostomy Fundraising Highlights

Fundraising supports our essential services such as Ostomy Youth Camp, the Ostomy Visitor Program, webinars, marketing and communication, and Chapters and Peer Support Groups across Canada. This year, our goal is \$100,000 again. To date, we have raised 46% of our goal. We would like to thank all who participated in fundraising and those who donated to our cause. Special thanks go to our top ten fundraisers this year:

1. **Bill Power** was the #1 fundraiser, bringing in \$4,360 for the Ostomy Halifax Team.
2. **Heather Cameron** with Team Crohn-O Tigger stepped up to raise \$3,275.
3. **Yaser Nadeem**, OCS webmaster, raised \$2001.
4. **Tiffany Shorson**, OCS marketing volunteer, raised \$1225 for Team Calgary Ostomy.
5. **Gail Colpitts** raised \$1,000 for Team Strollin' Rosebuds in Moncton, NS.
6. **Joan Peddle**, OCS director, also raised \$850 for the Strollin' Rosebuds.
7. **Esther Halton** raised \$750 for Team Calgary Ostomy.
8. **Rosalie Tuchscherer** stepped up to raise \$640.
9. **Denise Nicholson** raised \$550 for Team Strollin' Rosebuds
10. **Lisa Gausman**, Ostomy Canada Magazine editor, raised \$500 for Team Calgary Ostomy.

**Corporate sponsorship raised \$15,000. Special thanks to our Diamond Sponsors:**



The 2023 Step Up For Ostomy campaign runs until March 31, 2024. Our fundraising goal will include other campaigns, such as the upcoming direct mail-out — “**Holiday Appeal**,” so you have many opportunities to donate. However, we hope to crush it this year and not only meet our goal but continue to raise awareness. Ostomy awareness is an important matter, and though the big day may happen once a year, we must continue taking action to eliminate the stigma and raise awareness and funds to support Ostomy Canada’s programming. ○





# UNSUNG HERO


## Candy Boily

### Ostomy Hamilton



Candy was the ray of sunshine during a very dark period. Always upbeat, she suggested new ideas and provided solutions to how we would proceed to support our members.

As well as taking on the treasurer position, Candy monitored all email and telephone inquiries for the association. She travels across the city weekly to check our mailbox, and her house became the collection point for supplies donated for FOW Canada. Perhaps the most intensive job Candy has happily taken on is the 'Ostomy Handbook' production. Ostomy Hamilton has expanded the handbook to the entire province of Ontario. She contacted every ostomy retailer in Ontario for advertising, added edits to the handbook and managed the contract with the printing company. It was a considerable task which Candy took on with ease.

Ostomy Hamilton would not and could not fulfill our mission without Candy. She is truly the backbone of the association. She selflessly gives of her time, supports any initiative we become involved with, and is all over fantastic. We are grateful that Candy chose (or was volunteered by Gerry) to become associated with us. We would be lost without her. 

**O**stomy Hamilton has been blessed by some great volunteers who are dedicated and passionate about our mission. Candy Boily is one of those people.

We all laugh when we hear the story of how Candy came to be on our board of directors. Candy and her husband Gerry became members of our association in 2008 after Gerry underwent ostomy surgery. In essence, Gerry 'voluntold' her into joining our group.

Candy came on board with a huge smile and great ideas. She stepped right in and was immediately put in charge of the '20/40' group. Over time, she became our 'jack of all trades.' She was immersed in all the different committees, especially our visitors program. Candy puts together all our packages and liaises with all five hospitals in the Hamilton area.

In 2020, during the confusion of the Covid 19 Pandemic and the retirement of our long-term executive team, Candy graciously stepped up and became our new treasurer. It was a chaotic first year for everyone on our board. We were learning how to move to an online meeting platform, the reality of losing several longstanding members to the virus and declining membership. We felt we were struggling to stay afloat.

## GET THE SUPPORT YOU NEED.

Speak to an Ostomy Canada  
Certified Ostomy Visitor  
in your area!



[www.ostomycanada.ca](http://www.ostomycanada.ca)  
Toll-free: 1-888-969-9698

# ostomy tips for **CELEBRATING THE HOLIDAYS**



It's that time of year again! Whether it's a birthday, Easter, Ramadan, Thanksgiving, Christmas — the holidays are here, and it's time to celebrate! For those living with an ostomy, the anxiety of being around people can add some extra stress. Don't worry! With a few simple tips, you'll be ready to confidently and joyfully ring in the festivities.

## **1. Stifle A Noisy Stoma**

Be mindful to relax your abdominal muscles so gas can easily pass through the stoma. If you feel the rumble of gas, try pressing your hand or forearm against your stoma. Hint: wear a jacket with pockets to discretely do this. Ambient noise will make most stoma noises inaudible.

Dressing to muffle your stoma can also help. This can include high-waisted pants, layers, sweaters, or undergarments like shape wear. One item you can find easily in the maternity section is a belly wrap or band. There are also some specialized ostomy products designed to muffle noise, including:

- Stoma Stiffler
- Stealth Belt with optional Muffler added.
- Stoma guards like Stomaplex

## **2. Be Mindful About Food**

Another consideration is not arriving to dinner on an empty stomach. Missing meals can create

more gas, so eat a small breakfast and snacks until dinner is ready. Increased output is also not ideal, so consider eating a small portion and bringing some home for later.

Certain foods can cause more gas. This includes beans, beer, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, corn, cucumbers, cauliflower, mushrooms, peas, radishes, spinach, dairy products, and excess sugar.

Foods that can slow output can also be helpful, like Applesauce, bananas, cheese, boiled milk, marshmallows, pasta, smooth peanut butter, pretzels, rice, bread, tapioca, yogurt, bagels, and oatmeal.

## **3. What About Alcohol?**

You may find that gastrointestinal upsets associated with alcohol that used to occur before surgery are gone with removing the diseased bowel. However, those with ileostomies are at greater risk of dehydration and electrolyte loss, and you should have water, juice, or pop with your drink. You can also buy packets of Hydralyte to carry in your pocket or purse. Beer and carbonated drinks can produce gas. Alcohol may give you loose output or extra output or not affect stool. Everybody's different.

## **4. Minimize Odours**

Ostomy deodorizer – don't leave home without it! All the major

companies offer bottles of liquid ostomy deodorant, even in travel sizes. If you are in a pinch, drug stores often sell products like

VIP Poo spray or Just a Drop which can also help to mask the odour. Just A Drop also makes the perfect purse-sized spray.

Some foods, such as asparagus, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, beans, eggs, fish, onions and some spices, will increase odour.

## **5. Always Be Prepared**

Extra ostomy supplies are always a good idea, especially when travelling. You can leave them in the car, which is not recommended for extreme heat or cold. You can create a small kit in your purse or a backpack. Be sure to pre-cut the flange and use individual wipes or travel sizes to keep it compact. There is a no-rinse wipe by Safe N' Simple: Peri-Skin Cleaner & Adhesive Remover. If you must change while away from home, some companies sell odour-proof disposal bags, like Attiva Ostomy Essentials' Sean-N-Toss Ostomy Disposal System. You can find more travel tips on our website: [www.ostomycanada.ca/travel-tips](http://www.ostomycanada.ca/travel-tips)

## **6. Leave No Trace**

Here are a few last tips for managing your ostomy during the holidays. Avoid backsplash when you empty by lining the toilet with toilet paper. If there is still stool after flushing, use a wad of toilet paper to wipe the bowl and flush again. You can also try a biodegradable pouch liner such as Colomajic. Wet Ones offers individually wrapped Antibacterial Wet Wipes, if you want to keep it clean for the next person. ○



# OSTOMY AWARENESS

## Canadian Trailblazers

## Jean-Pierre Lapointe, 1941 - 2023

Au moment d'écrire ces lignes on apprend le décès de M Jean-Pierre Lapointe un des piliers de la vie des personnes stomisées au Québec et au Canada; Il a été une source d'inspiration pour beaucoup d'entre nous.

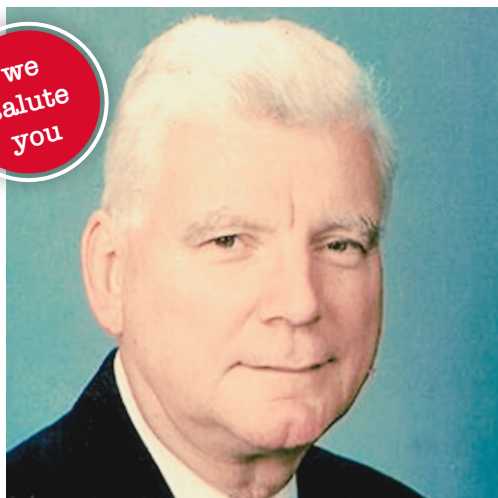
Jean-Pierre Lapointe

Date de Décès : 9 – octobre – 2023

Date de funérailles : octobre 27  
2023

Montréal, le 9 octobre 2023, à l'âge de 81 ans, est décédé Jean-Pierre Lapointe, policier retraité de la Sûreté du Québec. Il laisse dans le deuil son épouse Mme Nicole Mc Hugh, ses enfants Stephan, Patrick et Isabelle Lapointe (Vincent), ses petits-enfants Félix, Clara et Robin, ses frères, ses sœurs et leurs conjoint(e)s autres parents et des ami(e)s.

Vous pouvez faire parvenir vos messages de sympathie et vos dons à l'Association d'Iléostomie et de Colostomie de Montréal (AICM) et/ou à l'Association québécoise des personnes stomisées (AQPS) sur le site Web de l'AQPS ou par virement bancaire au 418 815-7723.



At the time of writing, we learn of the death of Mr. Jean-Pierre Lapointe, one of the most important contributors to the lives of ostomy patients in Quebec and Canada. He has been a valuable inspiration for many of us. More details will follow shortly.

Jean-Pierre Lapointe

Death date: Octobre 9, 2023

Funeral Date: Octobre 27, 2023

Montreal, on October 9, 2023, at the age of 81, passed away Jean-Pierre Lapointe, retired police officer of the Sûreté du Québec. He is survived by his wife Mrs. Nicole Mc Hugh, his children Stephan, Patrick and Isabelle Lapointe (Vincent), his grandchildren Félix, Clara and Robin, his brothers, sisters and their spouses other relatives and friends.

You can send your messages of sympathy and donations to the Ileostomy and Colostomy Association of Montreal (AICM) and/or to the Association Québécoise des personnes stomisées (AQPS) on the AQPS website or by bank transfer at 418 815-7723.

By Réal Lamarche. Information and inspiration by Jude Ruest .



## Joel Jacobson, 1940 - 2022

Ostomy Canada Society is proud of the induction of our dearly missed volunteer into the Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame. Joel would have been overwhelmed with this great honour bestowed upon him. He was an excellent Team Player, and his humour, charm, and dedication to our mission earned him our prestigious Maple Leaf Award. We congratulate Joel's wife, Cathy, and their children, Jason and Debra.



# ostomy tips for **EMBARRASSING SITUATIONS**



**DID THAT REALLY JUST HAPPEN?** The closure at the bottom of my ostomy bag just opened while I was standing in my friend's living room! I need to get to the bathroom STAT! There is a mess on her living room floor and I am soooooo EMBARRASSED!

Those of us who have had an ostomy for many years certainly can relate to similar situations cropping up unexpectedly more than once. They are truly mortifying when they occur. However, if we are able to understand that these situations happen from time to time; and are potentially unavoidable, it makes it easier to accept, calmly deal with, and get on with life.

I had to think of a way that I can emotionally handle it when these embarrassing moments 'pop' up. Then it came to me; my ostomy is my baby!

An infant who may do anything, anytime, anywhere. It is generally understood that the infant does not know any better nor have any type of control. Well, my ostomy; who I call Ileana (since she is an ileostomy), does not know any better nor has any type of control. Now, I knew I had to stop getting upset when things did not go as I had planned. I tell myself, that everything is all right. In my lengthy experience I have learned that I just need to clean myself up first and then take care of any other messes. It's OKAY!

So, I am fine when I am alone when these surprises happen. How about when I am with a group of people who are purely acquaintances and are not aware of the fact that I have an ostomy? This is more difficult. First, I have to accept the fact that it is perfectly acceptable to have an ostomy. I am just as attractive and productive with or without the ostomy. I am a beautiful and caring woman who gives back to her community every day. The ostomy is strictly a way to get rid of wastes and does not define me. I can allow myself to be human and as such realize that everyone has unexpected events and may experience an embarrassing moment - of any kind. If they can deal with the situation and then go about their business, so can I. Nothing will hold me back from living life to the fullest.

The facts of life are that everyone must eat, sleep, eliminate and pay their bills in order to survive. The phone, electric and water companies do not care how they get paid so long as it arrives on time. Well, the same goes for us. It is of no consequence whether we eliminate through the back or the front. Just do it!

I came to accept this so it is no big deal and then if I have an incident I say something like, "Ooops, my ostomy bag just popped! Can someone please get me a towel and help me to the bathroom?"

Many times there are questions afterwards; but I do not mind because it presents the opportunity for me to educate others which leads to a better understanding and the creation of positive stories.

**"People fear what they don't understand & that leads to stigma."**

Thus; the stigma and fear are reduced when I set a positive example. I found most people to be very understanding, empathetic to the situation and gain an appreciation by furthering their knowledge. I also believe this leads to their being kinder and more compassionate should they again meet someone experiencing a similar situation in the future and be able to assist them.

Here is a tip that helps me. I have two closures for my drainable bags. One is the closure that comes with the bag; the second is a barrette placed about an inch above the given closure. This helps reduce the amount of leakages from the bottom of the bag. Also; networking is great because I can share ideas with others like me. Social media groups and attending conferences are two possibilities and I strongly recommend both of them. The more people you meet in a similar situation the better. Maybe someone has a solution you did not think of or perhaps you have an idea that will help them. You are never alone.

So, go out, be confident, and wear two closures and the next time you have an embarrassing moment remember to tell yourself everything will be alright!

Humor is always good too - POOP HAPPENS!! ○

**By Lynn E. Wolfson, Weston Florida. As featured in the Summer 2020 edition of Ostomy Canada Magazine.**



## Connecting With You... *Ann Durkee-MacIsaac*



Jennifer Johnson (MLA), Anne Durkee (OCS),  
Cathy Harley (NSWOCC) - Alberta Summit

### FAREWELL & INTRODUCTION

After completing my term as Chair of Ostomy Canada Society, I want to take this opportunity to share with each of you that it has been my pleasure to serve on the Board for several years, to have done a very short term as Vice-Chair and to move on to the Chair of the Board.

I am thankful for the colleagues that I have worked with and the many committees that form our operations. To John Hartman and Dana Ypma, who have both engaged with the Board and myself through their journey and mine. I appreciate the many support groups in our Society who work very hard to support people living with ostomies. Their devotion to OCS is never gone unnoticed.

I will remain on the board as a director for another term and will continue with my passion for Advocacy, Disability Tax Credit, and the Visitor Program.

In the coming fiscal year, it gives me great pleasure to introduce our newly elected Chair of the Board of Directors, Jacqueline Bloom. Jackie lives in New Brunswick and is personally familiar with living with an ostomy. She began her working career as a nurse, made the change to Health related organizations and is very experienced and knowledgeable in fundraising, governance, and finance. We are very

pleased to have Jackie involved and look forward to her knowledge and skills that she will bring to the table.

We also welcome Janet Paquet as our elected Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors. Janet has a very extensive volunteer history with Ostomy Canada and personal experience living with an ostomy. She is currently a coordinator with the Ostomy Youth Camp, and co-president with her husband Mike of the Hamilton & District Ostomy Association.

I wish Jackie and Janet much success and look forward to working with them and the Board to move forward to yet another transition of success.

### JOIN US IN CHANGING LIVES ON GIVING TUESDAY!

## UNLEASH GENEROSITY



This Giving Tuesday, make a difference in the lives of ostomy patients across Canada. Ostomy Canada is on a mission to support, empower, and uplift those who have undergone ostomy surgery, and we need your help!

# GIVING TUESDAY

## GIVE TODAY





*aac*, Past Chair of the Board of Directors, Ostomy Canada Society

## **Ostomy Canada Attends Alberta Summit To Ask For Access To More Care For People Living With Ostomies.**

On October 5th I had the pleasure to attend the third summit held by NSWOCC. Previously we held summits in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and recently in Red Deer, Alberta. Our audience are invitees from the provincial government, NSWOC Nurses, and associates from hospitals. Our ask is "ACCESS TO MORE CARE" for persons living with ostomies in Alberta.

My place on the agenda is to tell of my journey living with an ostomy. The lack of care from a NSWOC Nurse not available in a close by location, the distance necessary to travel to receive care when one lives in a rural area, the high costs of devices necessary for a person with an ostomy, and the fear that this journey is not only one of physical issues but that of medical issues as well. Recognizing over the years that we need to advocate for access to more care, has given me the purpose to be involved with Ostomy Canada and to partner with NSWOCC.

Ostomy surgery is indeed a journey, one that is a life change and most often takes from one to two years both physically and mentally. There are many who experience mental health challenges such as social isolation, sexual dysfunction, hopelessness, suicidal thoughts, quality of life, and depression. All of which, the patient requires access to care.

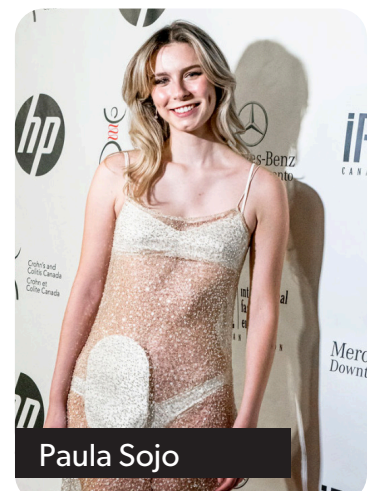
Many thanks to NSWOCC for giving Ostomy Canada and myself the opportunity to inform the invitees what an ostomy life is like and what we require. ○



## **Ostomy Canada Sponsors The International Fashion Encounter**

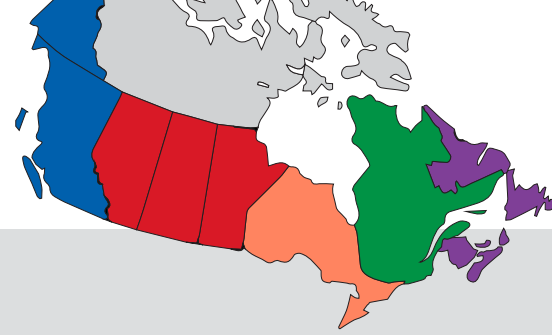
Ostomy Canada Society was excited to partner with Crohn's and Colitis Canada in attending and sponsoring them at the International Fashion Encounter on September 22, 2023. The event proved to be a powerful platform for promoting body positivity and inclusivity by prominently featuring ostomates in its showcase. By doing so, it not only empowered those with ostomies but also contributed to a more inclusive and representative narrative within the fashion industry. We will continue collaboration efforts at the next World Ostomy Day in 2024. Ostomy Canada extends our gratitude to the Ostomy Toronto Chapter for their financial support. ○

*Photo credit: Crohn's & Colitis Canada*





# REGIONAL REPORTS



## Pacific

- Andy Manson

Fall greetings from the Pacific region, which includes BC and Yukon.

All our region's peer support groups and chapters are doing fine, focusing on what they do best: supporting people with an ostomy and their loved ones.

Victoria's group hopes to find a new facilitator and discuss how their group will move forward.

Vancouver chapter is busy planning its annual Christmas party under the direction of their new president, George Pick. Vancouver and Coquitlam joined to hold a very successful Step Up for Ostomy. The attendees enjoyed goodies and the walk that finished just before a rainstorm happened. They also raised funds for Ostomy Canada. A big Thank you to those who participated.

The Comox group continues to meet and enjoy chatting over coffee and supporting each other.

The Chilliwack group also has new leaders at its helm. They are doing an excellent job supporting people living with an ostomy in their community.

The West Kootenay group meets monthly with members supporting each other and people who just had ostomy surgery.

We are fortunate in the Pacific region to have such dedicated people willing to take time out of their busy lives to help others.

## Prairies

- Deb Carpentier

Edmonton Ostomy Peer Support Group now has five qualified Ostomy Canada Society Visitors who completed the training in a group setting in September. The training was completed within 4 hours at a local library, positive feedback on the online training was received, and the setting was a great way to share, reflect, respect and embrace each person's experience of living with an ostomy. We continue to grow and get stronger. Anne Le, the Edmonton group facilitator practising NSWOC, and Mary Hill, Alberta Health Services Homecare, did an excellent presentation together at the Alberta Summit.

Regina has expanded its outreach to include all parts of the province this fall. Having the Saskatoon Chapter dissolve has left a hole in the province, and we're working towards re-engaging people in Saskatoon and other communities. In September, letters and information packages were sent to all pharmacies in the province, providing information on the local group and Ostomy Canada. A package is also being sent out to all the surgeons and gastroenterologists to inform them of the resources available for their patients. We're reaching out to all the NSWOCs in the province to ensure they are all aware of the support services available to people living with an ostomy. We hope that information and support lead to more connections and one-on-one support. Patty Gianoli and Deb Carpentier spent an entire day in Saskatoon, meeting up with some of the 'old' members and the NSWOC clinic at RUH, vendors and the Crohn's & Colitis rep.

Step Up For Ostomy was a big success for Regina, with over 45 donors and \$6200 raised to support all the programs and resources available with Ostomy Canada Society.

Calgary ran its Step Up For Ostomy campaign on September 16, and it turned out to be a beautiful day, with 60 people attending, eight ostomy exhibitors with displays and a combination of awareness walk and chair yoga. The event wrapped up with a BBQ, door prizes and a tally of \$3355 raised by Calgary Ostomy and members.

On October 5, there was a one-day Alberta Summit of NSWOC Nurses in Red Deer, and six members spent the day at the summit, networking with the nurses and manufacturing professionals. See page 9 for more info.

Calgary will be holding Ostomy Visitor Training on November 25 and has volunteer positions open for this, and many others such as Treasurer & Marketing Team. Also, join their on December 16 for their Christmas Social.

## Ontario

- Ian McNeil & Janet Paquet

Members of Ostomy Hamilton and the Halton-Peel Support Group participated in McMaster University iBiomed Engineering Design Studio. Over five days, over 200 students heard firsthand the impact of life with an ostomy. The students were tasked with designing new ostomy products and/or accessories to help improve the lives of ostomates.

The Ontario version of the 'Ostomy Handbook' has been reproduced by Ostomy Hamilton and has currently gone to print. It will be available shortly for chapters and peer support groups to purchase at cost.

Niagara Ostomy will be hosting an ostomy fair day On October 18.

Ontario was pleased to send six children to the Ostomy Youth Camp this past summer. Thanks to Halton-Peel Support Group, Ottawa Ostomy Support Group and Ostomy Hamilton for sponsoring these children. The kids had a fabulous time and can't wait for next year!

## Québec

- Réal Lamarche

EN

All associations in Quebec are in the process of reorganizing themselves to offer comprehensive services to all ostomy patients. Recruiting volunteers is a problem in many places.

The regional associations in Quebec are in the process of organizing their memberships as support groups with the Ostomy Canada Society to offer the vision of the OCS to all persons living with a stoma in Quebec.

At the time of writing, we learn of the death of Mr. Jean-Pierre Lapointe, one of the most important contributors to the lives of ostomy patients in Quebec and Canada. He has been a valuable inspiration for many of us. More details will follow shortly.

## Atlantic

- Joan Peddle

2023 has been a year of reconnecting with the Atlantic Region, returning to regular meetings and gatherings of our fellow supporters of Ostomy Canada.

I attended OCS BOD meetings in Mississauga September 14-17, and it was terrific to meet face-to-face with everyone. We have a new Chair and Vice Chair, and we thanked outgoing chair Ann Durkee MacIsaac for all her hard work and dedication to OCS.

Ostomy Canada has an online Visitor Training program now, and we are grateful to Deb Carpentier and Ann Durkee MacIsaac for working on and making the program a reality. There is a link on our OCS website that makes it easier to access, and I am aware of a fair amount of our supporters in the Atlantic Region who have completed the course and some who are planning to in the near future. This is the link to the page to start the training: <https://ostomy.talentlms.com/>

Ostomy Halifax is held on an education day on October 21, I presented, as well as one of our supporters from the Moncton Chapter, Louise Burley.


I have been in touch with several of the chapters and PSGs. Cape Breton has changed to a PSG, and thanks to Stacia for her continued support of her ostomy community.

Newfoundland (Mount Pearl) continues to enjoy in-person meetings, sends a newsletter full of information, and has all the dates for next year's meetings. They will have a Christmas get-together and are reaching out to their community.

Christine MacCallum (PEI) has taken a step back and now has a new supporter to assist the PSG, and her name is Judith Bayliss. Judith and Christine continue to raise awareness in the area and remain true leaders in the ostomy community.

Saint John has new supporters who have a Facebook page and are involved with their community to raise awareness of all people with ostomies.

Ostomy Moncton gathered supporters for their Step Up day on September 23 and raised awareness in the community. There is also planning to meet with government officials to raise awareness and lobby for coverage of ostomy products and the need for more NSWOCs to assist our ostomy community.

I hope to continue my role and work hard on behalf of the Atlantic Region and Ostomy Canada. I enjoy my involvement in an organization that is there for people with ostomies in Canada. 

# Ostomy Events

Find support, learn some tips, and meet others living with an ostomy in your area!

## Pacific

SUPPORT GROUP, Comox Valley - bi-weekly

## Prairies

CHAPTER MEETING, Winnipeg - Nov. 22

OSTOMY VISITOR TRAINING, Calgary - Nov. 25

SPECIAL MEETING, Regina - Nov. 25

SUPPORT GROUP, Calgary - Nov. 28

SUPPORT GROUP, Medicine Hat - Dec. 14

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL, Calgary - Dec 16

## Ontario

OSTOMY VISITOR TRAINING, Hamilton - Nov. 25

CHAPTER MEETING, Halton-Peel - Nov. 28

## Atlantic

CHRISTMAS AUCTION, Halifax - Dec 3

CHRISTMAS PARTY, Fredericton - Dec 12

## Quebec

SOUPER DE NOËL, Richelieu-Yamaska - Nov. 25

DÉJEUNERS COMMUNAUTAIRES, Montréal - Déc. 23

DÉJEUNER COMMUNAUTAIRE, Québec-Lévi - Déc. 3



Did you know there are over 50 ostomy support groups in Canada?

[FIND LOCAL SUPPORT](#)



Would you like to include your event in Connects & our social media?

[CONTACT US](#)

## Hello Medicine Hatters! Join Our New Peer Support Group!



**Heather Williamson**  
Facilitator,  
Ostomy Medicine Hat

### OSTOMY MEDICINE HAT

A new Ostomy Canada Peer Support Group has been formed in Medicine Hat, Alberta. Heather Williamson, facilitator is a 4 year member and volunteer of the Calgary Ostomy Society and recently moved to Medicine Hat.

Please contact Heather for more info:

e: [ostomymedicinehat@gmail.com](mailto:ostomymedicinehat@gmail.com)

facebook: [@ostomymedicinehat](https://www.facebook.com/ostomymedicinehat)

"I want to give back the support I have received from the group and be an example for others. It is possible to live a somewhat normal life and strive to live life to the fullest."

- Heather

**Join Our Support Group Via Zoom On Dec 14, 2023 At 7 pm MST**





# OSTOMY AWARENESS

## Ostomies in Film



### STUCK A Short Film About Raimo Strangis

In 2021, you may remember that Raimo Strangis' novel, *With Little Means*, was featured in the winter edition of *Ostomy Canada* magazine. He shared his personal story of giving up his music dreams due to severe ulcerative colitis and eventually needing ostomy surgery. Since then, some exciting things have transpired. After the book caught the attention of actor and film producer Micheal Pillarella, they decided to adapt it into an inspiring short film that encourages living life to the fullest. Their goal was to create

an honest, emotional film to reach a wider audience through film festivals. Stay tuned for more updates! Learn more at [www.staggforrestfilms.com](http://www.staggforrestfilms.com).



### OSTOMATE A Documentary By Noel Young

Ostomy youth camp alumni Noel has teamed up with camper Oliver and camp coordinator Lisa Gausman for a film project. He hopes to raise awareness of Ostomy Canada and Youth Camp. Click to watch his YouTube video!



## Become a Volunteer

Volunteers are not plentiful, this crisis is threatening Canada's nonprofit sector. A shortage of volunteers has led to the cancellation and suspension of critical programs and services across Canada and, in some cases, the closure of entire organizations. Persons living with ostomies need to consider volunteering to assist us with our support to over 135,000 people living with ostomies in Canada.

Ostomy Canada encourages you to complete an application found on our website. We need volunteers. Another critical element is the need for more Support Groups in many locations in Canada. Ostomy volunteers who offer their support in their own communities can help.

**SIGN-UP TO VOLUNTEER TODAY!**



# OSTOMY CANADA AWARDS

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Awards Committee of Ostomy Canada, I would like to acknowledge Lauren Wolfe - 2023 NSWOC Recognition Award, Ruth Kenney – 2023 Maple Leaf Award and Debra Carpentier – 2023 Chair's Award . It is my pleasure to acknowledge their tremendous leadership, support, and commitment to the Mission of Ostomy Canada and the impact each of these people have made within their local communities and beyond. Ann Durkee-MacIsaac

## Chair's Award

# Deb Carpentier

## Director from Regina, SK

- Dedicated anchor in various sectors of our organization.
- Excels in management, innovation, and social companionship.
- Rich history of volunteering in Calgary and Regina's ostomy chapters.
- A vital advocate within the Ostomy Canada Society for a decade.
- Her compassionate, knowledgeable, and committed nature makes her a valuable model volunteer in our community.

**CHAIR'S AWARD:** The Chair's Award states that "the Award can be bestowed upon any member at any level within the organization or an associate with whom the Chair of the Board (in this case Ann Durkee-MacIsaac) deems to have demonstrated outstanding voluntary services on behalf of the organization."

People in leadership have the privilege of recognizing the achievement of others by giving them an award. This is an important moment for me as Chair. I can tell you that this year there have been many incredible,

hardworking, and compassionate people I've had the pleasure of working with and knowing. However, one person stood out for their remarkable practice of volunteering one's time and talents for the mission of Ostomy Canada. This person has been an anchor for their work and volunteerism within many sectors of our organization. They have become an example of remarkable skills in management, development, innovation, and social companionship with associates.

I have had the absolute honor of working closely with this person throughout the years and it gives me pleasure to tell you of their many contributions to the communities in which she belongs, especially Ostomy Canada Society.

Without further ado, the Chair's Award goes to a person who I believe is well-rounded as a volunteer with Ostomy Canada Society and one that I feel should be honored for their contributions. It gives me great pleasure to

present the Chair's Award to Debra Carpentier, my friend and colleague. Deb was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba and later moved to Regina in 1985 where she attended school. Following her high school graduation, she moved to Calgary and lived there for 13 years. She worked for CBC in Calgary and returned to Regina where she continued her employment in an administrative capacity.



Thirty-seven years ago, she married the best pickle in the jar, excuse me I mean in Pickle Ball and in tribute to both her and her husband they have had a journey of love, commitment, travel, and lots of fun. In her only daughter's words," thanks for being the best parents, role models and partners to each other."

Her daughter Lindsay and her husband gave them the best gift of all, three beautiful granddaughters. Deb enjoys spending time with them as well as baking, partying, and hugging each of them as often as she can.

Deb has an extensive history with ostomy chapters in Calgary and Regina where she volunteered in several positions and events. Presently she is editor of the Regina Newsletter, works with their website and is VP.

Deb has been an advocate for people living with ostomies as an Ostomy Canada Society member for 10 years. She has been instrumental in updating the Visitor Program and in the past year and a half has been involved in rewriting many of the sections of this program as well as our new website design and on-line training. Deb is in her second year as the Regional Administrator for the Prairies and sits on the Board as a Director. Deb is also part of our executive committee and when working with us is compassionate, knowledgeable, and valuable. She is a model volunteer and is always committed to the task. She is a kind and caring person both within her own community and our ostomy world.

Please join me in congratulating Deb Carpentier for the "CHAIR'S AWARD", I cannot be happier to see her honored here today.

**Nominated by Ann Durkee-MacIsaac**

## NSWOC Recognition Award

# Lauren Wolfe

## NSWOC from British Columbia



Lauren Wolfe goes above and beyond what is expected of an NSWOC. I know from having had several NSWOC's the difference between someone doing their job and someone who is fully committed and caring. Lauren has helped so many patients in different ways according to their different needs and she researches these different needs on her own time.

The ostomy world of BC's Lower Mainland would sadly miss her presence. We are very lucky to have her.

Lauren has continuously volunteered her time by either showing up to meetings or social events. She is a regular contributor to Vancouver Ostomy's newsletter. She also received her Masters of Clinical Science. Lauren has also organized workshops with other ostomy product companies and overall, she does a tremendous job!

She will be a panel speaker at an upcoming symposium for Crohn's Colitis of Canada and will talk about ostomy care. She shows up to our yearly Christmas party and brings prizes to give away from her work and from her personal use of her own funds.

Lauren Wolfe goes above and beyond what is expected of a NSWOC nurse. I know from having had several NSWOC's the difference between someone doing their job and someone who is fully committed and caring. Lauren has helped so many patients in different ways according to their different needs and she researches these different needs on her own time.

**Nominated by Vancouver United Ostomy Association**

**Thank you to our Awards Committee!**

Joan Peddle, Andy Manson, Sarah Kadach, Ian MacNeil, and Troy Curtis.



# Maple Leaf Award

## Ruth Kenney

### NSWOC from Nova Scotia

- For 50 or more years, Ruth has been helping people living with an Ostomy and their families in Canada
- Helped to establish the national visitor training program
- Founder of Ostomy Halifax Society in 1973
- Ruth remains the conscience and soul of Ostomy Halifax
- Supported and helped start chapters and satellite groups in the Atlantic region
- Original (OG) ostomy nurse in Nova Scotia
- Recent former director of Friends of Ostomates Worldwide (Canada)

Ruth helped to establish the national visitor training program. She is a founder of our organization, has supported and helped start chapters and satellite groups in our province and within the Atlantic region and was the original (OG) ostomy nurse in Nova Scotia. The preceding list is amongst nearly countless contributions to the local and national ostomy community. She is also a recent former director of Friends of Ostomates Worldwide (Canada). She has collected and sent ostomy supplies to FOWC's office for many years so those without ready access to supplies would have some.

Before there was a visitor training program Ruth would help ostomates in the hospital as an ET nurse and on her own time outside of work hours. As mentioned she helped start the national visitor training program.

It is quite possible that in the 50 or more years that Ruth has been helping ostomates and their families in Canada that she has contributed to each and every one of the boxes that could be checked above. I am sure she has contributed in every way possible to Ostomy

Halifax, including before it was named that. She helped found its predecessor organization in 1973 and was its second president from 1977-78. As mentioned above, she helped develop the first national visitor training program and was, for a time, a board member of the national organization. Until very recently Ruth was a board member of FOWC and has collected ostomy supplies locally for many years so that they could be distributed to those supplies around the world to those that could most use them.

Ruth was an RN who had ostomy surgery in 1969 after being diagnosed with ulcerative colitis. She planned

the first Maritime Regional Ostomy Conference in 1978, attracting 200 participants from Quebec and the four Atlantic Provinces. In 1979 Ruth paid her own way to attend an intense six week training program in enterostomal therapy education at Tucson Medical Center because she wanted to help current and future patients who had undergone ostomy surgery. At the time she was the only nurse in Nova Scotia with such training. In 1984, with the support of Ostomy Halifax,

Ruth led the charge to have the province fund the first full-time Enterostomal Therapist nurse (ET) at the VG Hospital in Halifax. This work paved the way for more ET hires in Nova Scotia hospitals in the years after that. In 1993, Ruth became the first recipient of the United Ostomy Association Enterostomal Therapist of the Year Award. At the time of the award there were over 200 chapters of the association in Canada and the United States. That year, Ruth received the City of Dartmouth Volunteer of the Year award. In 2002, she was named Canadian Enterostomal Therapist of the Year. In all of the years between then and now Ruth remained active in the chapter as an active member of the business team, arranging program speakers, liaising with the NSWOC community, supporting FOWC, advocating for ostomates, participating in fundraisers, and helping anyone who would ask selflessly - you name it and



she has probably done it for the betterment of our community.

It would be hard to imagine anyone more deserving of Ostomy Canada's highest award than Ruth Kenney. Ruth has been contributing to Ostomy Canada's vision of helping those who have undergone ostomy surgery live life to the fullest since she became an ostomate herself in 1969. Not four years after having her own ostomy surgery, the result of ulcerative colitis, Ruth co-founded the organization that would eventually become Ostomy Halifax Society (1973). Adapted from the Ostomy Halifax Society website, here is a capsule of Ruth's impressive resume:

**1973** – Ruth started the first of a series of annual lectures at the VG Hospital in Halifax for second year nursing students on their role in rehabilitating ostomates.

**1977/78** – Second President, Ostomy Halifax.

**1978** – A planner of the first Maritime Regional Ostomy Conference which attracted 200 participants from Quebec and the four Atlantic Provinces. Ruth becomes the resource person for effective pre and post-op management of ostomates at the VG Hospital.

**1979** – Completed ET training in Tuscon Arizona.

**1982** – Planned and participated in an ostomy workshop at the Middleton Hospital for nurses and ostomates in the Annapolis Valley area.

**1984** – The first Enterostomal Therapy program was started at the VG Hospital thanks to the lobbying efforts of Ostomy Halifax, and two ET nurses including Ruth Kenney.

**1986** – Ruth's article on "Conventional Versus Continent Ileostomy" was published in World Council of Enterostomal Therapy.

**1993** – Ruth became the very first recipient of the United Ostomy Association Enterostomal Therapist of the Year Award. At this time there were over 200 chapters of the association worldwide.

**2002** – Ostomy Canada presented Ruth with the ET of the year award.

Additionally, in 1993 Ruth received the City of Dartmouth Volunteer of the Year Award. It is truly

difficult to believe she could have found the time to do more for her community but that is Ruth. In the early days of Ostomy Halifax Ruth was known to travel with a companion or two through Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada helping to start chapters and satellite organizations. Back in Halifax, she understood well the importance of "support" and would encourage new ostomates to attend meetings, sometimes providing drives to and from the meeting venue. People would come to meetings to ask Ruth questions, which she always happily answered. She often went well beyond the call of duty.

Ruth is a recent past director of the board of the FOWC. A huge supporter of the organization, Ruth has gathered and packaged ostomy supplies for them for years so those supplies could be re-distributed to ostomates the world over.

In 2013 Ostomy Halifax Society acknowledged Ruth's enormous contributions with its highest honour, the Burleigh Wile Award. Now in her 80s, Ruth remains the conscience and soul of Ostomy Halifax and a fervent advocate and supporter of all people who have ostomates and their support networks. If you were to attend Ostomy Halifax's monthly business team meeting's, Ruth would be there contributing meaningfully to the conversation just as she has for 50 years. She remains a fixture at our monthly member meetings and continues to chair our programming committee.

***Nominated by Ostomy Halifax Society*** ○



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