

Girls With Guts[™].org

SPONSORSHIP PACKET



WHO WE ARE

Girls With Guts is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is to support and empower women with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) and/or ostomies by building sisterhood and self-esteem.

We offer extensive online programming to foster community and support for women with IBD, as well as annual in-person retreats.

Our organization strives to help our members, in all facets of womanhood, cope with an inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis) diagnosis. Despite its prevalence and the young age at which IBD can strike, the stigma surrounding IBD and ostomies remains a significant social issue for women. Socially, discussing bowel movements is considered impolite and "unladylike."

Women diagnosed with IBD are often left to deal with not only the stigma, but also cope with the diagnosis within societal expectations of beauty and behavior. Women with an IBD diagnosis desperately need to know their value as a woman isn't diminished. Due to the isolating nature of this disease, encouraging self-esteem and self-advocacy are essential.

One challenge for women with IBD and ostomies is to find confidence and support from both the public and the medical community. We strive to make a meaningful impact on the lives of these women by providing them with the tools, resources, and connections they need to cope with their diagnosis and the challenges of daily life with chronic illness.

This includes:

- mental health resources for improving self-esteem
- self-care resources
- advocacy strategies
- patient education tools for medical decision-making

We also provide information about medications, pregnancy with IBD, and surgeries. Our goal is to connect women with these resources and each other. The members of Girls With Guts can then live their lives with a supportive sisterhood while making the most of the medical care available to them. We've built a strong community with a powerful voice that can stand in the face of stigma and taboo to normalize the conversation about IBD and ostomies.



OUR LEADERSHIP

As an organization, we're uniquely equipped to stay responsive to the needs of our members because the Board of Directors and growing team of volunteers consist of individuals who are IBD patients themselves. Our leadership prides themselves of being active members of the larger IBD and chronic illness community, which helps to share and inform their work with Girls With Guts.



Alicia Aiello, President

Born and raised in Philadelphia, PA, Alicia puts a little bit of "brotherly love" into everything she does.

She is a graduate of the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University where she studied Television, Radio, & Film. She now works as a freelance editor, producer, videographer, and photographer.

Alicia was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis at the age of 14 and when she was re-diagnosed with Crohn's disease at 22, Girls With Guts was just starting out. Her passion for GWG was instantaneous as she had not had that kind of support before.

She has been on the board of Girls With Guts since 2013 starting out as Director of Multimedia and stepped up as President in 2017. She's always had a knack for bringing ideas to life and that is where her passion and Girls With Guts merged. If she's not helping to coordinate the annual Girls With Guts retreat or furthering the overall vision, you can catch her raising awareness about her personal IBD journey whenever she can.



Sarah Lemansky, Secretary

From a small town in southeastern Massachusetts, Sarah has a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography from Lesley University and is currently a photographer primarily working with newborns. She loves to read, listen to true crime podcasts, and spend time with her three guinea pigs and bunny.

After being diagnosed with ulcerative colitis in 2014, she received her ostomy in 2016 due to a bout of toxic megacolon and is currently in the process of constructing a j-pouch.

She always says that finding Girls with Guts was like coming home, ever since attending her first retreat in 2016. She fell in love with the idea of using art as a means of coping with IBD, and hopes to help other women find the same reprieve that she did by helping them to access their creativity.



Kristen Weiss Sanders, Director of Development

Born and raised in upstate NY, Kristen is still learning to be a southern girl following her move to Atlanta for graduate school in 2010. She completed her Masters degree in neuroscience at Emory University and is now a biology professor at Dalton State College in northwest Georgia.

A third-generation IBDer, Kristen was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis in 2006 and re-diagnosed with Crohn's disease in 2012 after her j-pouch began to fail. She is now a permanent ostomate and shares all of her adventures with her stoma, Roo.

Kristen attended her first Girls With Guts event at the 2017 Celebration in Chicago. Jumping on board as the blog coordinator and later content manager, she is excited to now put her science background and grant writing skills to good use as part of the board.



Elizabeth Cutler, Event Coordinator

Elizabeth was born and raised in Colorado Springs. She lived for several years in Maryland, where she graduated from Montgomery College with an Associates Degree in Hospitality Management with a focus in Meeting, Conference and Event Planning. She became sick after the birth of her child in 2010 and was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis at that time. After a bowel perforation in 2012, which resulted in an ileostomy, her diagnosis was changed to Crohn's Disease. Her ileostomy was made permanent in March 2018.

Elizabeth has been a member of GWG since 2013 when she attended her first retreat in Texas. She has attended every retreat since then. She has made lifelong friends and sisters through this incredible organization. In 2015, she returned to Colorado to work in the hospitality industry. She spends her time hanging out with her son, Emmett, reading, binge-watching Gilmore Girls, and fangirling musical theater.



Wesley Sanders, Treasurer

A southern gentleman native to Augusta, GA, Wesley is excited to use his finance skills as part of the Girls with Guts team. He is currently the director of finance at a provider-owned health insurer and is completing his MBA at Georgia Tech. He also holds a BA in psychology from Binghamton University and a Master of Divinity from Emory University.

A self-proclaimed health policy wonk and an enthusiastic part of #HealthPolicyTwitter, he is passionate about health care reform and regulation. While not an IBDer himself, Wesley he has supported Kristen, his wife of nine years, through more than a decade of hospitalizations, surgeries, and daily life with Crohn's disease.

OUR PROGRAMMING

Our key programming consists of:

- Two Annual Retreats
- Post-surgical Butt Baskets
- A Pen Pal Program
- POOP
- Social Media Advocacy
- Collaborative blog
- GWG Map Application to connect local GWGs
- GWG Ambassadors

Annual Retreat

Our annual retreats are held in various locations across the United States and offer a chance for the women involved in the Girls With Guts community to connect in-person. During these retreats, which are typically held at camp-like locations, we bring in doctors, social workers, and other clinicians to lead workshops and talk about the current trends in the IBD community. Women who attend have the weekend to feel included in our unique community and not defined by their disease. They bond with each other through team building exercises and recreational activities while also connecting with leaders in the field of IBD medicine. It's not an exaggeration to say that lifelong friendships are forged here. The overwhelming response to retreat weekends has been joy and relief at spending time with other women who share the same struggles and truly understand the realities of life with inflammatory bowel disease. You can watch a video highlighting each of our retreats here: <https://vimeo.com/ibdgirls>

New Attendee Retreat

Looking back to our first retreat in Michigan in 2013, approximately 30-35 women (including the board) proved to be a great size for fostering community and personal connections. To this end, in June 2019, we hosted our first ever, fully-funded "newbie" retreat for 30 women who had not yet been able to attend one of our in-person events. Some of our favorite quotes that we heard at the end of the week were "What's the opposite of lonely? Girls With Guts!" and "This retreat feels like just the beginning. Before I didn't anyone with IBD and now we're already making plans to keep meeting up." We initially set the goal of covering the cost of attendance for all individuals due to the huge financial strain of chronic illness that the majority of our members face.

Nearly all of this year's participants echoed what an enormous relief it was to be able to attend a GWG event without paying a registration fee. With your help, we hope to continue this initiative and offer yearly "newbie" retreats at no cost to participants! You can read more of what our new attendees said about this year by [clicking here](#).

Virtual 5K Fundraiser

Each year, a growing number of women, along with their families and friends, from around the country join together for a designated day of fundraising and walking/running as a community. Last year, we had 66 participants who raised more than \$3800 and hope to have at least 75 this year! We are extremely proud that between participants in our Virtual 5K and corporate sponsors for this event in 2018, we were able to meet our fundraising goal of \$15,000 to make hosting our 2019 New Attendee Retreat a reality.

Butt Basket Program

Recipients of our Butt Basket program are women who are either undergoing or recovering from pouch or ostomy surgery as a result of their IBD. We raise funds and partner with various companies who give donations to create custom packs of IBD-related goodies, perfect for a purse or car glove compartment, particularly in the early post-op days. A woman can fill out an application to receive a Butt Basket for herself or someone can apply on her behalf. We include a card written by one of our members to provide her with personal support and encouragement.

Pen Pal Program

Our Pen Pal program allows women to connect on an individual basis. Upon applying, participants are matched to another woman of a similar age and diagnosis. They can then exchange cards, gifts, and words of encouragement via traditional postal mail. We also offer a subprogram called **Pen Pal Angels**. The women that sign up for this subprogram offer support for women who are going through a difficult surgery, hospitalization, or other exacerbation of their IBD. Participating women are notified monthly of others in the community who need extra support and then send out cards and well wishes to the woman in need.

Philanthropic Ostomy Outreach Program (POOP)

POOP is a partnership with another woman-run organization, Kindred Box, where women with ostomies can donate their unused ostomy supplies for redistribution to those in need. For the many women who have a temporary ostomy that is later reversed, this program is a way for them to pass along their excess items without them going to waste. Products are then distributed to individuals without insurance or steady access to these essential supplies.

Social Media Outreach

Our largest number of participants are members of our **online private Facebook forum**. This forum, comprised of women with IBD and/or ostomies and mothers of girls with the same, now has more than 4,600 members and is one of our most successful efforts.

In this group, women are able to make connections directly, share their stories, ask questions they'd be too embarrassed to ask in a public setting, and create local groups for in-person get-togethers. We routinely monitor this group to ensure the conversations are positive and productive. Moderators also ask questions and poll our members to see what they're talking about, what resources they need from us, and who might be willing to participate in various projects at the organizational level.

We're proud to announce we just added our private **Teen Forum** on Facebook! This new programming has been requested by our community and we're glad to offer this new space where teens with IBD/ostomies can chat and make friends.

Our Blog

We also have a blog that is dedicated to sharing stories of empowerment, struggles, and triumphs by women with IBD and/or ostomies. Both individuals who've been recently diagnosed and IBD veterans are likely to find something relatable in the writing by our diverse group of contributors. New to our blog in 2018 is "IBD Academy", an educational series providing an overview of IBD basics, guides to current diagnostics and treatments, and highlights of new research in the field. In addition to its support of women with IBD and ostomies, we hope that the blog can be a resource for caregivers hoping to gain better insight.

NEW FOR 2019

Girls With Guts Map Application

We recently launched Girls With Guts Map Application helps connect women from around the country and facilitate in-person meet-ups with other GWG sisters locally and while traveling. These informal get-togethers between retreats is an effort that we believe is important for the building and maintenance of our community. With this app, women can mark the zip code where they live and browse for other members in their area. Additionally, there is in-app messaging to allow for instantly making connections and plans! We had more than 500 subscribers within the first month.

GWG Ambassadors Program

We've now created a Girls With Guts Ambassadors program to more intimately and formally connect our organization with the clinical community treating individuals with IBD in the United States. The doctors who've spoken at our retreats routinely let their patients know about Girls With Guts. Lately, this has become more commonplace from other clinicians as well (such as ostomy nurses); however, we often find out about this just by chance. We'd like to capitalize on this momentum and continue to encourage these connections by having a set of resources for healthcare providers to give newly diagnosed and pre-op patients. This information would direct individuals to the wider resources of the organization in addition to providing female-specific IBD and ostomy information.

Girls With Guts Ambassadors will receive:

- training on our mission and programming
- tips on advocating for our community
- tips on speaking with medical professionals
- resources to provide to clinicians and care centers

Under this umbrella, we're also launching a Sister-Sister program for pre-op patients, so they can have someone locally to walk them through surgery pre- and post-op. We believe this would make a fundamental difference in the well-being and healing of these women. Initially, we are piloting this program with our Butt Basket recipients.

OUR LONG-TERM GOALS

We hope to eventually offer three retreats throughout the year:

- Newbie retreat for those who are new to the organization
- Larger retreat for returning members
- Teen and parent retreat for teens diagnosed with IBD and their parents

We would love for all these retreats to be at zero or low-cost to the attendees to help ease the financial burden of living life with a chronic disease.

It's currently estimated that up to 25% of patients with IBD are diagnosed during adolescence. While we're proud of our retreats for adult women, we recognize the unique challenges faced by girls diagnosed with IBD in their teens. We think it's important for the parents of these teens to also learn how to help their child cope with the realities of IBD, in addition to connecting with others. We hope to host our first teen/parent team-building weekend in summer 2021.



WHY SPONSOR US?

Sponsoring Girls With Guts helps us continue our programming so women with IBD and/or ostomies can feel empowered, comfortable in their own skin, and not alone.

Benefits of sponsorship include:

- ☑ Interactions with our growing membership base
- ☑ Shoutouts on Girls With Guts multiple social media platforms listed below
- ☑ Features in Girls With Guts quarterly newsletter
- ☑ Company name featured on the Girls With Guts website

How will my sponsorship funds be used?

Depending on the type and amount of sponsorship you choose, your funds can target various levels of programming. For example, you could choose to sponsor a retreat registration fee in the form of a scholarship. If you choose to make a general monetary donation, your funds could go towards a keynote speaker, sponsoring a Butt Basket, or help with our shipping costs. We are always looking to expand our reach and programming to meet the needs of an ever-growing community. See page 9 for a breakdown of specific funding levels and benefits.

20,000+
Facebook Fans

4,600+
Facebook Forum Members

3,500+
Twitter Followers

6,300+
Instagram Followers

4,500+
Unique Page Views on
Our Website Per Day

1,200+
Newsletter Subscribers



SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

Are you interested in becoming an event sponsor?

The great thing about becoming an event sponsor is you'll reach women from all over the country by participating in our events. We love telling our ladies about new and useful brands that may make living with IBD and/or an ostomy a little easier. Please see our outlined sponsorship tiers below - or even consider sponsoring an entire event for more exclusive perks!

Thank you for your consideration.

We'd love for you to join us in our mission as we continue to grow as a sisterhood!

LEVEL DESCRIPTION	GWG Golden Girl	GWG Superstar	GWG Rockstar	GWG Groupie	GWG Fanatic	GWG Bestie	GWG Friend
	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$1,000	\$500	\$200	\$100
Name and hyperlinked presence on our website	Large Logo	Medium Logo	Small Logo	✓	✓	✓	✓
Logo and website information listed in future event brief	Large Logo	Medium Logo	Small Logo	✓	✓	✓	
References to company and website in social media promotions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Company sponsored content in quarterly newsletter	✓	✓	✓	✓			
A video session on our Facebook page to share more about your organization with participants	10 min	5 min	2.5 min				
A dedicated mile our next Virtual 5K	✓	✓	✓				
Event t-shirt or bag	Large Logo	Medium Logo	Small Logo				
Opportunity to table at future Girls With Guts in-person event	✓						

Sister Sister (\$50)

Interested in sponsoring a Girl With Guts Butt Basket?

Your gift can pay for the cost of sending a post-surgical Butt Baskets to three ladies having and recovering from bowel surgery. You can choose to remain anonymous.

Swag Sponsor

Want your company to join in on our future events?

We are looking for sponsors for the follow items:

- ☒ T-shirts & shirts
- ☒ Lanyards
- ☒ Water bottles
- ☒ Sunglasses
- ☒ Drawstring backpacks
- ☒ Other useful items or information