

DARCO Sponsors Two Charitable Organizations in the Podiatry Field

By **DARCO International Inc.**

In 2022, Jamie Stephens of Emerson, Arkansas, noticed her daughter 6-year-old Maddie Jo’s leg had mysteriously become swollen. Concerned about a possible sprain or twist, the Stephens Family visited a doctor who found no signs of trauma or a clear reason for the swelling. Despite various treatment attempts, Maddie Jo’s leg continued to swell. It took

seven months and multiple visits to general practitioners, pediatricians, cardiologists, and oncologists across Arkansas and Texas before the Stephens family received a diagnosis of Primary Lymphedema and a referral to a clinic in Pennsylvania.

Lymphedema, a rare condition affecting only 1 in every 100,000 people, causes swelling in affected limbs—typically the lower extremities—due to the body’s inability



Stephens Family: Ian Darby and the Stephen’s family at the Walk to Rise event in Emerson, Arkansas.

necessary products feels like trying to climb uphill on roller skates, Darco is making that trek easier. I didn’t expect a reply from Darco when I sent the initial email. What they stand for is not just writing on a wall, but their words are backed by actions.” said Mrs. Stephens.

Riley Csernica, Global VP of Product Development for DARCO International, remarked, “We first learned about

the impactful work of the Jo Rising Foundation when its founder, Mrs. Jamie Stephens, shared how DARCO’s Body Armor® Cast Shoe significantly improved Maddie Jo’s life. Supporting her nonprofit with a donation of DARCO Body Armor Cast Shoes was an easy decision for us, knowing our medical footwear products could help Maddie Jo return to her favorite activities.”

In March 2024, Jo Rising organized its inaugural Walk to Rise Color Run 5K event in Arkansas. This fundraiser brought together children, adults, and families affected by Lymphedema to educate them about treatment resources, appropriate footwear and garments, while offering fun activities such as a color powder race, food, and live music.

Ian Darby, Direct Sales Manager at DARCO International, was in attendance at the Walk to Rise 5K Event in Emerson, Arkansas. “I’m proud to work for a company that not only supports organizations like Jo Rising but also encourages its employees to actively participate in such meaningful initiatives,” Darby expressed. “Meeting Jamie and the Stephens family is a great reminder for me of why we do what we do. I am honored to call the Jo Rising Foundation a partner and look forward to contributing to their ongoing efforts.”

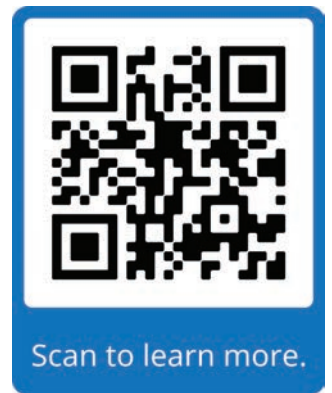
For more information about the Jo Rising Foundation and how to support Lymphedema advocacy in the US, visit jorising.org or [click here](#).

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ity to drain lymphatic fluid properly and is incurable. Maddie Jo’s condition made it challenging to find appropriate footwear, hindering her from participating safely in activities she loved such as biking, playing in jump castles, and engaging in recess and gym class.

Frustrated by the lack of information, accessible medical care, and suitable footwear options for her daughter, Mrs. Stephens founded The Jo Rising Foundation in 2023. This advocacy group aims to provide access to shoes, information, and support for individuals affected by this rare condition. Mrs. Stephens’ efforts quickly gained recognition, attracting sponsors and donors to support the cause.

“Primary and Secondary lymphedema is a disease that, unfortunately, remains under-recognized in both the medical field and social circles. Many individuals, including children, are fighting this disease with little to no help due to demographic limitations or financial constraints. Beyond disease management, accessing resources, professionals, and



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