

Writing your Donor Family



Writing to the family of your organ donor can be difficult. It may be hard to find the words to express your gratitude and or describe what this gift of life has meant to you and your family. Knowing that while you may be excited and celebrating the gift of receiving a transplant, someone else will be remembering a loss and this may make it even more difficult to find the words.

Donor families often report that donation has helped them with their grief. Receiving a letter from a recipient provides the donor family with comfort and assurance that their loved one's decision has improved lives.

Choosing to write to your donor family is a personal decision and not one that needs to be made immediately. Understand that all families grieve differently, and some take more time than others to respond. There is no time limit for corresponding with your donor's family. And what you say is completely up to you.

Some suggestions to help guide you:

Be sensitive to the family's feelings and be aware that they are coping with loss and grief.

Acknowledge and express sympathy for the family's loss.

Express gratitude for the gift you have received. Consider sharing how the transplant has affected your life.

Feel free to share information about yourself, your family, your interests, and occupation.

Do not include personal information, such as your last name, street address, phone number, physician's name, hospital, or any other identifying information.

Sign only your first name(s)

Sample letters have been provided for you to use as a guide.

Once you have completed your letter, please give to a Transplant Team Member. They will save a copy to your electronic medical record then forward to a representative at CORE, who will read and edit it, if needed, before forwarding it to the donor family.

Do not get discouraged if you do not hear back from the donor family. Write again; it can take time. Some families correspond with recipients, and others simply find comfort in knowing their loved one will not be forgotten.

Sample Letter

Dear Donor Family,

I have been thinking about you and your family since I received the gift of life through your loved one's gift of organ donation. I want you to know that I am grateful and I will continue to give thanks each day for this gift. I am so sorry for the loss of your loved one. I hope you find some comfort knowing that my life has changed because of your loved one's generous act. Words cannot express how thankful I am for your compassion. You have my deepest sympathy of your loved one and my greatest thanks for this second chance at life.

Sincerely,

(Sign your first name only)

Sample Message to write in a card

Please accept my gratitude for the gift of life that I received through your family's selfless gift of organ donation. Words cannot express how thankful I am for your generosity and compassion. You have my deepest sympathy for the loss of your loved one and my greatest thanks for this second chance at life.

Thank you.

(Sign your first name only)