

# Writing to Donor Families



The decision to reach out to your donor family is deeply personal. For donor families, receiving communication from their loved one's recipient brings comfort and validates the meaningful impact their loved one made.

For recipients, writing provides an opportunity to say thank you for the gift of life they have been given. Some recipients struggle to express their gratitude, but there are no wrong words – the most meaningful sentiments stem from the heart.

There's no set timeframe for writing your letter; you can do so when you feel ready. However, keep in mind that reaching out years later may pose challenges in locating family members.

Identities are kept confidential to protect the privacy of both recipient and donor family until both parties agree to share identifying information.

## **Ideas to share about yourself:**

- Your transplant experience and how it has affected your life
- Why you are grateful for their loved one's gift
- Your occupation, hobbies and interests
- Your family information (marital status, children, grandchildren)
- Photographs of yourself and/or family members
- Use your first name only and avoid any identifying information, such as city, hospital/transplant center or physician names.



## **Will I hear from the donor family?**

While many families appreciate hearing about the recipient's transplant experience, some find it difficult to express their emotions in writing. Therefore, there's no guarantee of a response, and the timing of any reply will vary. If the letter cannot be delivered for any reason, the organ procurement organization (OPO) will inform your transplant coordinator.

## **Mailing your correspondence:**

Please keep a copy of your letter for your records. Your letter must be sent to your transplant coordinator and may take several weeks to reach the donor family. When submitting your letter, be sure to include the following:

- Place letter in an unsealed envelope
- Complete the section below, tear off and provide it with your letter

*cut here*

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of transplant: \_\_\_\_\_

Organ(s) received: \_\_\_\_\_

Transplant Center: \_\_\_\_\_

*(see reverse side for release waiver)*

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## Writing Samples

Dear Donor Family,

I'm sure this letter is bittersweet to read. It is very difficult for us to write it as well. The reason I'm writing is to say thank you for the gift of your child's liver that you have given to our family. In August we received a phone call saying they have a potential liver for our daughter. We have never felt so much relief but at the same time so much sadness for the family that was losing a loved one. Because of you and your precious child, my daughter is alive and doing well today. Our 16-year-old daughter was diagnosed with auto immune hepatitis when she was 14. We were told she would need a liver transplant. As a mother all you want is for your child to be healthy. Now she has been blessed with a healthy liver and it has changed her life completely. We look forward to her growing up and having her own family. Your selfless sacrifice and kindness mean that our daughter has a bright future ahead of her. We think of you and your child every day and keep your family in our prayers.

With love,  
Your recipient family

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Dear Donor Family,

I am beyond words on how to express both my gratitude and grief I feel for your family. It truly takes a special kind of person/family to be able to make the sacrifice in your time of loss. Your family and loved one saved my life. You've been in my thoughts every day since the transplant. I don't know if my words can truly express my gratitude to you for giving me a second chance at life, but please know I'm thankful for every new day. I can promise you that I am doing everything I can to take care of myself and not let this second chance go to waste. Your gift has reached well beyond me. Your loved one's gift has made a huge impact on my family, friends, community and myself. Thank you so much for your decision to save the life of someone you have never met. I am beyond grateful for every day and will never be able to fully express my gratitude to you and my donor hero.

Thank you,  
Grateful Recipient

----- cut here -----

I hereby authorize and consent to the reproduction and publication of my letter by the organ procurement organization (OPO), transplant center, affiliates, agents of other related organizations without compensation. I understand that any portion of my letter may be shared with the public in any media, such as newsletters, marketing materials and websites for the purpose of educational, marketing and awareness opportunities. My identity will always remain confidential. The OPO or transplant center reserves the right to redact any identifying information from my letter.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in sharing my experience: Yes ☐ No ☐