

Writing to the Family of My Donor



Our Aftercare Services team supports donor families following their loved one's donation. We are also here to help YOU by facilitating communications and connections between transplant recipients and donor families.

The decision to correspond with your donor's family is a personal one. Donor families welcome and appreciate communication. When you acknowledge the donor family's loss and express your gratitude, you confirm that their loved one's gift was meaningful. Remember, there are no wrong words; even a simple thank you is appreciated.

You may wish to keep identities anonymous and confidential. If you do choose to include your personal contact information within your card or letter, it will be forwarded along to the donor's family to use at their discretion.

"To a recipient I would say—don't worry about finding the right words. Our grief is real, no words you can write will make it worse - they can only make it better. Speak from your heart. We only wish to know that you are better, that your life has improved...those are the words that give us comfort." — Mother of a donor

How do I begin?

- Open your card or letter with "Dear Donor Family"
- Acknowledge and express sympathy for the donor family's loss.
- Express gratitude for the gift of life.

Write what you feel comfortable sharing about yourself and other family members. This may include occupation, hobbies, interests and what led to your need for a transplant, etc.

Examples:

"I offer my condolences for the loss of your loved one."

"I would like to offer my sincere gratitude for the gift of life."

"Please know I am forever grateful for the second chance this gift has given me."

Where do I send my card or letter? Place your card or letter in an unsealed envelope. On a separate sheet of paper, please write:

- Your full name
- Transplant center
- Organ received
- Date of transplant
- Mailing and Email Addresses

This separate sheet of information will allow us to match you to your donor's family and will not be forwarded to the family.

Will I hear back from my donor's family?

You may not hear back from your donor's family. Although they are often comforted by knowing how donation and transplantation has changed your life, they may not be ready to respond. When a donor family does make the decision to write, they tell us that writing to recipients and sharing their loved one's story helps them with their grief and healing.

Who do I contact if I still have questions?

Contact your Transplant Team or call/email Aftercare Services at:

(781) 373-7945 or AC@neds.org

Mail your letter and/or card along with your information sheet in one envelope to either your transplant center or directly to:

Aftercare Services

New England Donor Services

60 First Avenue

Waltham, MA 02451

If you prefer, email: AC@neds.org

"I am glad I wrote so they will know that their loved one's gift is remembered, appreciated, and will be honored every day of my life. Each extra day I am able to spend with my family means the world to me."

— A grateful transplant recipient