



Writing to the Recipients of Your Loved One's Donation Correspondence Guidelines

These guidelines will assist you should you wish to write to the transplant recipient(s) who benefited from your loved one's very generous gift of life. Many recipients have said that a personal letter from their donor's family helps them gain an even deeper understanding and appreciation of the meaning of this gift.

Below are guidelines to assist you with writing to the recipient(s) and/or their families:

Talk about your loved one:

- Use only the first name of your loved one.
- Include the state (not the city) in which your loved one lived.
- Include your loved one's age.
- Include your loved one's job or occupation (no company names).
- Include your loved one's family situation, such as marital status, children or grandchildren. Again, please use first names only.
- Be sensitive regarding religious comments and views, because the recipient's specific faith is not known.

Closing your letter:

- Sign your first name only.
- Do not include your address, city or telephone number.
- Do not reveal the name or location of the hospital or doctor involved with the donation.

Mailing your letter:

- Place your letter in an unsealed envelope.
- Include a separate piece of paper with your full name and the name of your loved one, including the date of his or her death. (This is for Gift of Hope's information.)
- Place these items in another envelope and mail them to Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network, Attn: Donor Family Services, 425 Spring Lake Drive Itasca, IL 60143.

Upon receiving your letter, we will review the letter to ensure confidentiality and then forward it to the transplant center with which the recipient is affiliated. The transplant center will receive your letter and forward it to the recipient if the time is appropriate. The transplant center must consider the status and well-being of the recipient before forwarding sensitive donor information. Gift of Hope is not always informed if letters are not forwarded to the recipient.

Will you hear back from the recipient(s)?

You may or may not hear back. Some recipients have said that writing to their donor's family helps in their recovery process and allows them the opportunity to thank them for their extraordinary gift. Some recipients, even though they are grateful, prefer privacy and choose not to communicate. Others prefer to wait until they have successfully coped with other matters involved with a transplant surgery, or they feel emotionally ready to write to the family of the individual who gave them the extraordinary gift of life.

You can also find sample letters and information on how to order special greeting cards free of charge to send to your loved one's recipient(s) by visiting www.giftofhope.org. Click on "Donor Families & Recipients," and then click on "Donor Family/Recipient Correspondence." If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Gift of Hope Donor Family Services at 630/758-2717. To contact Diane Schmitz, Donor Family Services Coordinator, e-mail her at dschmitz@giftofhope.org.