

## **For donor families: Writing to your loved one's recipient**

Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Network's Donor Family Services team is here to support you and your family following your loved one's donation. This includes facilitating the communications and connections you wish to pursue with your loved one's transplant recipients.

### **How do I begin?**

Write what you feel comfortable sharing about your loved one. This may include marital status, occupation, hobbies, or perhaps special interests your loved one enjoyed. You may want to write about how the donation decision has impacted you, your family, and your community. Carefully consider religious comments as the views of the recipients are unknown. You may wish to keep identities anonymous. If you choose to include your personal contact information, it will be forwarded to the recipient. Please be aware that while Gift of Hope does not redact identifying information, some transplant programs have privacy guidelines that affect such disclosure.

### **Where do I send my card or letter?**

Please email your letter to [donorfamilies@giftofhope.org](mailto:donorfamilies@giftofhope.org). At the top of your email, please include your loved one's name and their date of passing. Email is strongly encouraged, for quickest delivery and to avoid the risk of a mailed letter getting lost.

### **Will I hear back from the recipients?**

You may or may not receive a response to your letter. Some recipients like to wait until they are further along in their recovery before writing. Others may feel overwhelmed with emotion at the gift they received and have difficulty expressing their gratitude through written communication. It is possible that several months or even years could pass before they feel comfortable writing and/or are advised to send a communication. It is also possible they may never respond.

We have found that most recipients find comfort in hearing from their donor's family. When a donor family writes, it indicates to the recipient that you are open to receiving correspondence at that point in time. It has been our experience that even if a recipient does not write a letter, they honor the gift and your loved one in their own unique and special way.

You can find additional guidance including a sample letter and information on upcoming writing workshops on our website, at [giftofhope.org/donor-family-services](http://giftofhope.org/donor-family-services).

If you'd like help writing your letter or have more questions, please reach out to us any time at [donorfamilies@giftofhope.org](mailto:donorfamilies@giftofhope.org), 877-577-3747 or by mail at:

Gift of Hope Organ & Tissue Donor Network  
Attention: Donor Family Services  
425 Spring Lake Drive  
Itasca, IL 60143