

LifeQuest Organ Recovery Services

is the federally designated organ procurement organization for all of northern Florida. Our mission is to honor individuals' donor designations, to ensure a family's opportunity to donate and to maximize the Gift of Life through organ and tissue donation.

If you would like additional information, please call our office at 352-733-0350 or contact us at prdept@lifequest.ufl.edu.

The information contained in this brochure is based on the guidelines set forth by the National Kidney Foundation's National Donor Family Council.



Many donor families want to learn more about the recipients of their loved one's gifts and find solace in knowing that their loved one's gifts are benefitting others.

*Writing To
Donor
Families*



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Why should I write to my donor family?

The death of a family member is one of the more difficult experiences we face; however, in the midst of pain and grief, many donor families make a decision to help others through the Gift of Life. Learning how a recipient's life has improved since getting transplanted can give some meaning to the senselessness surrounding a donor family's loss.

Donor families receive limited information about the recipients, and we find that most families want to learn more. LifeQuest encourages correspondence between donor families and recipients.

There is no waiting period, so you can write to your donor's family as soon as you are ready. As making the decision to write or starting your letter may not be easy, we have some suggestions for what to include.

- Open the letter with "Dear Donor Family"
- Express sympathy for the loss of their loved one
- Thank them for supporting organ donation and for your Gift of Life
- Share your transplant experience – what the wait for a transplant was like, how your life has changed since your transplant
- Share information about yourself, spouse, children and grandchildren using first names only
- Mention your occupation and activities that you can enjoy since your transplant
- Include photos if they do not contain identifying information

Hearing how a recipient's life has changed and what they have been able to do since getting transplanted can give some meaning to a donor family's loss.

What information is off-limits?

To protect the privacy and the protected health information of both parties, do not include any identifying information. Avoid using last names, city or state of residence, phone numbers, names of hospitals or doctors, websites associated with you, email addresses or other social media contact information.

The organ procurement organization (OPO) that was involved with your transplant and your transplant coordinator will review all correspondence and remove any identifying information before it is forwarded.

How do I mail my letter?

- Place your letter in an unsealed envelope
- On a separate piece of paper include your full name, organ received and date of transplant
- Mail this to your transplant coordinator

Your transplant coordinator will send your letter to the appropriate OPO who will forward it to your donor's family.

The process of exchanging these letters takes several weeks, so please be patient.

Do donor families write back?

Some donor families find writing about their loved one helpful in their grieving process. Some may be too overwhelmed to respond. Even if your donor's family does not write back, they appreciate receiving recipients' letters and may find solace in knowing that their loved one's gifts are benefitting others.

Will I ever be able to communicate directly with my donor's family or meet them?

Each OPO's policy regarding direct communication differs. Usually after several anonymous letters have been exchanged between the recipient and your donor's family, and a year has passed since the donation, direct communication can be facilitated by the OPO and the transplant coordinator.

The donor family and the recipient will be asked to sign consent forms to release information, and the donor family will be given the recipient's contact information.