

Writing to Donor Families



A way to say “thank you”
for transplant recipients and their families

“How do I say thank you for such an incredible gift...I cannot find the words...”

You may share these same feelings. Writing to your donor family is a personal decision. This brochure is intended to support you and offer suggestions on how to say, “Thank you for the gift of life.”

Legacy of Life Hawai‘i supports and facilitates written correspondence between recipients and donor families. All correspondence is anonymous and identities are kept confidential. If you choose to write to your donor family, you may send a greeting card or a letter. Here is some information you may want to include.

Talk about yourself.

- Your first name only
- Your occupation
- Your family situation such as marital status, children or grandchildren. (Do not include last names)
- Your hobbies or interests

Talk about your transplant experience.

- Use simple language.
- Recognize the family and thank them for their gift.
- Describe how long you waited for a transplant.
- What was the wait like for you and your family.
- Explain how the transplant has improved your health and changed your life. Can you participate in activities now that you couldn't before your transplant?
- Explain what has happened in your life since your transplant.
 - Did you celebrate another birthday?
 - Did you become a parent or a grandparent?
 - Did you return to school or accept a new job?

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Be aware that the family is grieving the death of a loved one. Please be sensitive to their pain.



Closing your card or letter.

- Sign your first name only.
- Do not include your address, city or phone number.

Mailing your card or letter.

1. Place your card or letter in an unsealed envelope.
2. It is very important to include a separate piece of paper with the following information:
 - your full name
 - the date of your transplant
 - transplant center
 - type of organ
3. Place these items in another envelope.

You can deliver your letter to your transplant coordinator or mail it directly to:

Legacy of Life Hawai'i
405 N. Kuakini Street, Suite 810
Honolulu, HI 96817
Attention : Felicia

Legacy of Life Hawai'i staff will review the letter to ensure confidentiality and then mail it to your donor family. This entire process can take a few weeks, so consider this if you are mailing a holiday greeting or anniversary card.

Will I hear from the family who donated?

You may or may not hear from them. Some families have said that writing about their loved one and their decision to donate helps them in their grieving process. Other families, even though they are comfortable with their decision to donate, prefer privacy and choose not to write to transplant recipients.

Can I meet my donor family?

Yes. These meetings are rare, but they do occur. If both the recipient and donor family agree to meet, Legacy of Life Hawai'i can arrange a private meeting. This usually occurs after both parties have exchanged letters a few times and expressed in writing their wishes to meet each other.

If you would like more information, call Legacy of Life Hawai'i and ask to speak with Felicia Wells-Williams, RN, Director of Family Services Oahu: 599-7630 Neighbor Islands (toll free): (877) 855-0603



Legacy of Life Hawai'i is the nonprofit organization, selected by the federal government, to manage all non-living organ and tissue donations in Hawaii.