

WRITING TO TRANSPLANT RECIPIENTS

As a donor family member, you may or may not decide to write a letter or note to the transplant recipient of your loved one's organ. The decision to write to a transplant recipient is a personal one. You should also know that there is no time limit for sending a letter - you may write at any time. If it would make you feel more comfortable, you may choose to send a card during the holidays, or a *Thinking of You* card instead of a letter.

"I don't know where to begin"

Write what you feel comfortable sharing about your loved one and other family members. This may include marital status, occupation, hobbies, interests, or perhaps special things your loved one liked. You may want to write about how making the decision to donate has impacted you, your family and your community. Carefully consider whether to include religious comments as the views of the recipients are unknown.

We recommend that initially you keep identities anonymous and confidential. Avoid including any last names, street addresses, city names, phone numbers or names of hospitals and physicians. Use simple language and communicate in a sensitive manner.

"Will I hear from the transplant recipients?"

Some transplant recipients may send a letter or card to you in response to your letter. Other transplant recipients may choose not to write to you at this time - this is their personal decision. Many recipients have said they feel overwhelmed with emotion and have difficulty expressing their gratitude in a letter.

"Will I be able to communicate directly with the transplant recipients?"

Please note that correspondence is anonymous and identities are kept confidential until both the donor family and recipient indicate they would like to release and/or receive the other's direct contact information. If you would like to exchange contact information with your loved one's transplant recipient, please include your contact information at the bottom of your correspondence. A release form will be mailed to both you and the transplant recipient to sign and return. *Until both release forms are received, any identifying features such as last name, address, photos, etc. will be removed and the letter will then be forwarded.*

"Where do I mail my card and/or correspondence?"

Southwest Transplant Alliance's Family Care Coordinators are always available to answer any questions and assist you with writing your card or letter. Please allow for additional mailing time. Southwest Transplant Alliance will mail you a confirmation that we received and forwarded your correspondence or let you know, if for any reason, we are unable to forward.

Include on a separate piece of paper the following; your full name, your loved one's name, address, phone number, email, and date of donation and mail to:

Family Care Coordinator
Southwest Transplant Alliance
5489 Blair Road
Dallas, TX 75231

Here are some sample phrases and sentences to get you started:

- ❖ I find myself writing to you. I do not want to intrude in your life, but I can't help wondering about you. I would appreciate it if you would write and tell me about yourself.

- ❖ I think of my daughter's recipients often. Please write and let us know how you are doing.

- ❖ I waited for you to write and finally decided that I would write to you. I want to know how you are feeling and learn something about you. I will wait to hear from you.

- ❖ Dear Recipients, we would love to hear from all of you as it helps to know that some good came out of our tragedy.

- ❖ I think of you and wish you good health. Please write and let me know how you are doing.

- ❖ I was so thankful when I received your letter. It was good to know that you are doing well. I wish you a long life.

- ❖ I was very happy to hear from you. Just knowing that you are doing well helps me know that donation was the right decision.