

# HOW TO WRITE TO DONOR FAMILIES

## MAILING

**Address:** "Donor Family"

**Closing:** Sign only your first name.  
Please don't include your full name, address, phone number, or email.

On a separate sheet of paper, kindly include your full name and the date of your transplant. This will help ensure the letter reaches the correct family. This information is confidential and will not be shared with the donor family.

**Mail to:**

Lions Eye Bank of the Northeast  
Transplant Recipient Letters  
4 Tower Place, Suite 601  
Albany, NY 1220

## PROMPTS

- "How has this gift changed your daily life?"
- "What are you now able to do that you couldn't before?"
- "What would you want the donor family to know about you?"
- "How do you honor the gift you received in your life?"
- "What are you most grateful for after receiving this donation?"

## A PERSONAL DECISION

Writing to your donor's family is a deeply personal and emotional choice. Some recipients find comfort and healing in expressing gratitude and sharing how the gift has changed their life. Others may not feel ready to write – and that's okay. There's no right or wrong time to reach out.

At the Lions Eye Bank of the Northeast, we help facilitate correspondence between transplant recipients and donor families while maintaining confidentiality for both parties. If you decide to write, we will forward your letter on your behalf.

## WHY ANONYMITY IS IMPORTANT

Maintaining anonymity in these communications is essential for several reasons. It helps ensure privacy and protects both the donor family and the recipient. By keeping identities confidential, we avoid the potential for emotional pressure or expectations. This also allows both parties to engage in the process at their own pace, without the pressure of direct personal contact. Anonymity creates a safe space for both families to process their emotions and decide if and when they are ready for further contact, if ever.

## WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR LETTER

If you choose to write, here are a few ideas of what you might include:

- Your first name only
- Your age or general life situation (e.g., student, parent, retiree)
- How the transplant has impacted your life and health
- Activities or goals you can now enjoy or pursue
- A message of gratitude for the donor's gift and the family's generosity

Please keep in mind that we do not know the beliefs of the donor's family, so it's best to avoid religious comments unless you're certain of their relevance. Use simple and clear language in your letter to make it as heartfelt and accessible as possible.

## WILL I HEAR BACK FROM THE DONOR FAMILY?

You may or may not receive a response. Some donor families find great comfort in hearing from recipients, while others may not feel ready to respond due to the grief they're still processing. If they choose to write back, it may take months or even years. Even if you never hear back, your letter can offer profound comfort and meaning to a grieving family – letting them know that their loved one's gift made a lasting difference



**LIONS EYE BANK**  
*of the Northeast*