

Donor families and recipients are able to communicate with one another through Lifeline of Ohio's correspondence program. To do so, a donor family or recipient will send a letter to Lifeline of Ohio's Bereavement Coordinators who will ensure that it is sent to the correct donor family or recipient. Lifeline of Ohio maintains confidentiality within this process by ensuring that no last names (first names are OK), transplant hospital locations or contact information is shared. When both parties have stated in writing to each other that they would like to meet and/or share contact information, Lifeline of Ohio sends forms to both the donor family and recipient to authorize this.

There's no requirement for donor families or recipients to send letters; this is a very personal decision. For some grieving families, it may bring comfort to know more about the people their loved one saved or healed, but for others, it may be too difficult to hear. While recipients are truly grateful for their gift of life or healing, many of them feel a strong sense of guilt when writing these letters and may go through several drafts and revisions before sending a letter. For everyone involved, what matters most is that they do this at a pace that feels right to them.

Below is a real letter from a donor's mother to her son's organ recipients.

Dear Organ Recipient,

It is with great sadness and unbridled joy that I write this letter to you. As it is never easy to deal with the loss of a child, it warms my heart to know that he gets to live on through the lives of others by being a part of them. I'd like to commence this letter by telling you about the donor who has become part of you.

My son grew up in Ohio and is the first-born of three children. Unfortunately, his life was cut short at the young age of 17 due to a tragic car accident in October, 2019. Having just celebrated his 17th birthday, it became difficult to cope with.

My son played many sports throughout the years including baseball, basketball, soccer and his favorite sport, football. He was a junior in high school where he was a valued member of the varsity football team. He's remembered and loved by so many for his outgoing personality, smile, genuine authenticity and loving the spotlight by being the center of attention. He spent ample time becoming a Counselor-In-Training at a local summer camp for the last two years. He always had a love for children and enjoyed his time working there.

My son knew he had a purpose and his decision to be an organ donor at such a young age was always something that made me proud. As a mother, it's never easy losing a child and some days are better than others, but knowing his legacy gets to live on through you is one of the greatest blessing that could ever be had.

Please know that it has given my family great consolation knowing that he could assist your life. We hope that at a later date in the future, we might be permitted the opportunity to meet you. If you feel it upon your heart to meet, please do not hesitate to do so as I welcome it with arms wide open.

Thank you so much,

A Hero's Mother