

Correspondence Guidelines

Writing to Organ Transplant Recipients and Their Families

The decision to write to an **organ** transplant recipients is a very personal one. Sometimes, donor families choose to write to transplant recipients, and their families to share information about themselves and their loved one. For some donor families, this sharing with the transplant recipients helps them in their grieving process. Whether or not you decide to write to the **organ** transplant recipient is your choice.

If your loved one is a **tissue** donor, donor/recipient contact is difficult to coordinate because of the way bone and tissue is stored in tissue banks. If a physician requests specific tissue/bone from a tissue bank, but they don't track recipient information, it is impossible for ARORA to forward donor correspondence to a recipient and vice versa. Organ Procurement Organizations are working with tissue banks and physicians across the country to track recipient information more accurately.

Arkansas Regional Organ Recovery Agency (ARORA) facilitates all correspondence between the donor family and transplant recipients. All correspondence is completely anonymous and identities are kept confidential unless each family signs a "release and consent" form after some written correspondence between families.

If you would like to write to the transplant recipients, you may send a card or letter. The following guidelines may assist you in deciding what type of information to include:

Provide general information such as:

- Your loved one's first name only.
- His/Her job or occupation.
- His/Her hobbies or interests.
- Your family situation such as marital status, children, grandchildren.
- Since the religion of the transplant recipient's family is unknown, please consider this if you are including religious comments.

Closing your card or letter:

- Sign your first name only.
- Do not reveal your address, city, or phone number.
- Do not reveal the name of the hospital where your loved one died.

Mailing your card or letter:

- Place it in an unsealed, unaddressed envelope.

- Place above in a mailing envelope, and on a separate piece of paper, include your full name, address, phone number, your loved one's full name, and the date of donation.

**Mail to: Arkansas Regional Organ Recovery Agency
Attention: Donor Family Services Liaison
1100 N. University, Suite 200
Little Rock, AR 72207**

ARORA staff will review your card or letter to ensure confidentiality (information that may breach confidentiality will be taken out) and will forward it to the transplant center. The transplant center will then send it to the recipient.

Since your letter or card must be mailed to ARORA first and then forwarded, please allow extra time for your letter to reach the recipient. It may take several weeks for the transplant recipient to receive your correspondence.

Will I hear from the transplant recipients?

You may or may not receive a response from the recipients. Some of the transplant recipients write to their donor family immediately. However, many other transplant recipients have said that they are overwhelmed with emotion and have difficulty expressing their gratitude in words. As a result, for some reason, it may take several months or even years before they feel comfortable writing to their donor family. Some recipients may never be able to write.

If you have questions or need additional information, please call ARORA at (501) 907-9150 or (866) 660-5433 and ask to speak to the Donor Family Liaison.