



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF DONATION

It is because of your courage that lives will be saved.

Your unselfish gesture of compassion amid your loss is heroic. We hope you take comfort in knowing your loved one will be remembered by the many lives he or she has touched through donation.

We realize this is a difficult time for you, as you begin embarking on a journey of grief, remembrance and recovery. This resource guide has been created to help you on that journey and to answer questions you may have about the donation process.

This is just the beginning of our relationship with you. During the days, weeks and years ahead, LifeGift is committed to providing the support services you need.

Donating Organs and Tissue

Once the donation process has begun, it is not unusual for families to have additional questions. LifeGift is committed to maintaining open communication throughout the donation and beyond. Please contact your family care specialist with any questions or concerns. We appreciate your support of donation and hope the following information helps you understand the great gift your loved one has shared.



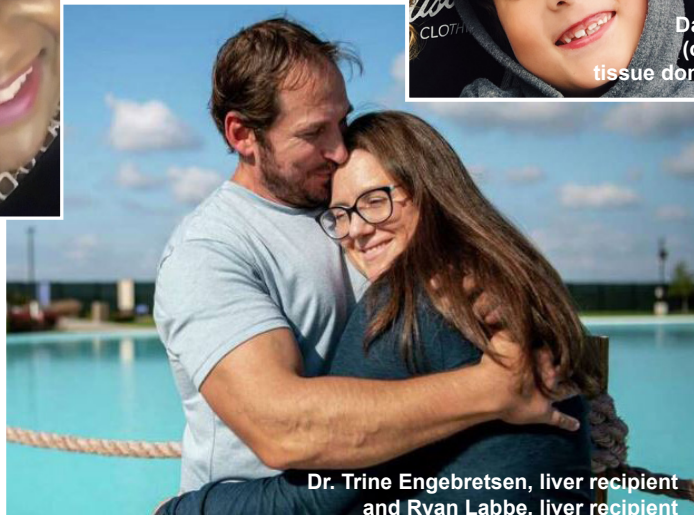
Clayton Shelden,
organ donor's family



Phyllis



Danielle Cialona
(organ, eye and
tissue donor) and family



Dr. Trine Engebretsen, liver recipient
and Ryan Labbe, liver recipient

Donation Process

Following is an overview of the donation process:

- **A Declaration of Death is Made, and Authorization is Obtained**

Tests will be completed to identify which organs or tissue can be donated. If brain death has been declared, your loved one will remain on the ventilator, and is supported with fluids and medications to keep oxygen and blood flowing to the organs.

- **Identify Recipients**

The United Network for Organ Sharing, commonly referred to as UNOS, is contacted to match the organs to the most appropriate recipients through a national placement database. The recipient for each organ must be located before the surgical procedure begins due to the limited amount of time organs are viable between removal and transplant.

- **Recovery**

Organs and/or tissue are recovered surgically in an operating room. Your loved one is treated with the respect and dignity that would be given to any patient undergoing an operation. Incisions are closed and reconstructed to aid the funeral director in the preparation.

- **Release to the Medical Examiner or Funeral Home**

Following recovery, your loved one may be released to the medical examiner (ME) or to a funeral home. The ME's office is usually located in a facility separate from the hospital. The ME determines whether an autopsy will be required, as well as the length of time a body remains at the ME's office. (For example, if your loved one dies during the weekend, the ME may not release him/her to the funeral home until Tuesday.) The donation process does not affect this time duration. Once the ME has completed his or her review, your loved one is then released to the funeral home.

Donation will not interfere with customary funeral arrangements. LifeGift staff will contact the funeral home that you identify before the recovery, and again once it has been completed. The funeral home or the ME issues a death certificate.

- **Donor Family Support Services**

Several weeks following the donation, you will receive a letter from LifeGift. This letter will confirm the organs/tissue that were recovered, as well as general information on each recipient of vital organs (kidneys, liver, pancreas, intestine, heart and lungs). Names and locations of the recipients are kept confidential.

One tissue donor can commonly provide tissue to save countless people over months or even years. One year following donation, families may contact LifeGift for more information. Upon request, the legal next-of-kin may access and obtain release of the donor's medical records.

LifeGift is committed to providing your ongoing support services by honoring the memory of your loved one and recognizing his/her gift of life. Our staff is available to answer your questions.

When a Loved One Dies



When a Loved One Dies

The time following the passing of a loved one is filled with a sense of numbness and anxiety. Yet, many decisions must be made at this most stressful time. LifeGift has compiled the following information from several sources involved in grief counseling, as well as family members who have been through the death of loved ones and made the courageous decision to donate organs and tissue. LifeGift hopes it will be helpful to you in making these important decisions during this time of loss and sadness.

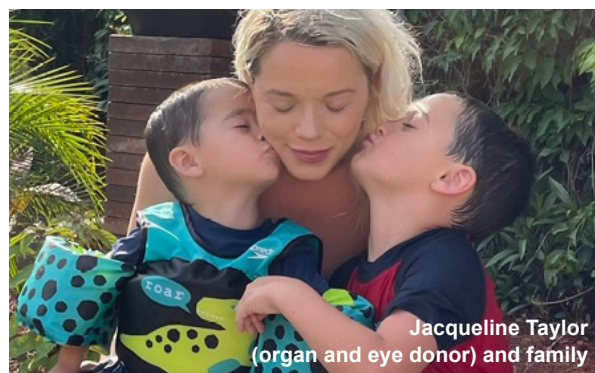
While You Are at the Hospital

- Have someone call other family members to notify them of the death and let them know if they should come to the hospital. If you are a member of a religious congregation, have someone notify your minister of the passing of your loved one.
- Select a funeral home and sign the necessary forms to allow the hospital to release your loved one's body to the funeral home. If you have had no previous experience with a funeral home, you may want to contact a family member or close friend for a recommendation.
- Know that, under certain circumstances, the death of your loved one may be considered a case for the medical examiner (ME), whereby an autopsy may be performed. The ME may transfer the body and belongings to another facility, contact the family about all arrangements and decisions, and complete the death certificate.
- In non-ME cases, the family may request an autopsy. Costs associated with a private autopsy are the responsibility of the family.
- Gather your loved one's personal belongings that are still at the hospital.

When You Go Home

- Decide on the type of funeral service and where it will be held. Commonly, families must decide between an open or closed casket; burial or cremation; and church, funeral home or graveside service. Generally, an open casket is an option following donation.

- Make an appointment with the funeral home. While you are talking with the funeral director, find out about the deadline for the newspaper obituary. You may wish to acknowledge the donation publicly by including a reference in the obituary, such as “John shared the gift of life through organ/tissue donation.” Your funeral director can assist you with the appropriate wording.
- Contact clergy regarding availability and planning of the service.
- Gather the following items to take to the funeral home:
 - Clothes for the deceased
 - Information for the newspaper obituary (list of family members, clubs, organizations, etc.)
 - Life insurance policies and employer benefit forms
 - Recent photograph (often used for hairstyling)
 - Military discharge papers (DD214), if applicable
 - Burial policies
- Notify family and friends of the arrangements.
- Appoint someone to keep records of deliveries, calls and visits to your home.
- If you are alone, ask someone to spend the first night with you.



Jacqueline Taylor
(organ and eye donor) and family

Information You Will Need

Listed below are items you may need to gather for the funeral director to help with preparations:

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| • Name of deceased (first, middle, maiden, last) | • Father's full name |
| • Age; date of birth (month, day, year) | • Mother's full name (maiden) |
| • Place of birth (city, state, country) | • Physician's name, address and phone number |
| • Race; family's national origin (American, Spanish, French, etc.) | • Funeral home name, address and phone number |
| • Country of citizenship | • Clergy's name, address and phone number |
| • Marital status | • Name of cemetery or anticipated place of final disposition, address and phone number |
| • Name of surviving spouse, if married (maiden name, if wife) | • Information provided by (your name, relationship, address and phone number) |
| • Social Security card or number | • Other family members' names, addresses and phone numbers |
| • Profession/occupation (type of business or industry) | |
| • Employer's address | |
| • Residence address and/or mailing address (if different) | |

At the Funeral Home

- If you choose burial: Be prepared to select and purchase a casket and vault, set the time and place for the funeral, and sign a contract.
- If you choose cremation: Be prepared to decide on a viewing of remains, religious/memorial service and providing for the ashes.
- Request at least a dozen certified copies of the death certificate.
- Inform the funeral director if you want flowers or if you prefer contributions be made to a favorite charity.
- Give the funeral director the information for the newspaper obituary.
- Leave the photograph with the funeral director if one is to be used. If you want the photograph returned, confirm that arrangement. (You may wish to ask that your address be withheld from the public notice.)
- Contact pallbearers/honorary pallbearers.

At the Cemetery

- Have a representative from the cemetery help you locate the gravesite if you already have one. If you do not own a gravesite, be prepared to purchase one.
- Be prepared to pay for the opening and closing of the grave even if you already own the gravesite.

After the Funeral

- Check with the Social Security office about benefits.
- File claims for insurance:
 - Life insurance
 - Mortgage or loan insurance
 - Accident insurance. Various types of insurance by the employer of the deceased
 - Auto insurance
 - Credit card insurance
 - Insurance on bank accounts
- Re-establish bank accounts and safe-deposit box in the appropriate name. Call before going to the bank to be sure that you have the necessary papers to make these changes. It may be desirable to have a co-signature on all accounts. If so, make arrangements with the person of your choice.



Collecting the Papers

Consult an attorney for advice about reviewing or updating wills, trusts, durable power of attorney and other financial matters. If you do not have an attorney, The Lawyer Referral Service of the local bar association can provide a list of attorneys. If you cannot afford an attorney, the Legal Aid Society can help you find legal assistance at reduced rates. This is a list of documents you may be required to have copies of after the loss of a loved one:

- Social Security card or number
- Certified copies of death certificate
- Marriage certificate
- Copy of a will
- Birth certificates of dependent children
- Copy of insurance policies
- Copy of certificate of honorable discharge
- Complete list of property
- Bank account number(s)
- Car title
- Driver license

Normal Grief Reactions

It is normal to react physically and emotionally to a loss. Symptoms you may experience include:

- **Physical Sensations**
 - Tightness in the chest or throat
 - Oversensitivity to noise
 - Shortness of breath
 - Weakness in muscles
 - Lack of energy
 - Dry mouth
 - Hollowness in stomach
- **Thoughts**
 - Disbelief
 - Confusion
 - Preoccupation
 - Hallucinations
 - Sense of presence
 - Helplessness
- **Behaviors**
 - Sleep disturbances
 - Appetite disturbances
 - Distractibility
 - Social withdrawal
 - Dreams of loved one
 - Crying
 - Avoiding reminders
 - Restless overactivity
 - Visiting places
 - Carrying objects
 - Absent-mindedness
- **Feelings**
 - Sadness
 - Anger
 - Guilt
 - Loneliness
 - Anxiety
 - Fatigue
 - Shock
 - Relief
 - Numbness



Jade Washington,
double lung recipient

After the Donation

LifeGift believes that appropriate care and support of donor families is a large part of the donation process. Families are treated with the utmost compassion, dignity and respect at all times.

LifeGift is entrusted with the gift of life when someone is a registered donor or when their family so generously authorizes donation. LifeGift pledges to:

- Make every effort to see that their gift is given to those in need.
- Thank the family on behalf of the recipients.
- Provide timely and accurate follow up on the outcome of their gift.
- Provide information on grief support services.
- Provide forums to remember loved ones and honor their gifts.
- Facilitate correspondence between a donor family and recipient(s) when requested.
- Provide periodic status checks on the recipient(s) of their loved one's gift as requested.
- Provide additional information whenever it is requested.

Opportunities to Honor Your Loved One

At LifeGift we honor the donor's selfless act of giving hope to others and are committed to provide ongoing support to donor families. Support may include invitations to remembrance events, resources and opportunities to connect with other families whose loved ones gave the gift of life.

You can honor your loved one's legacy and keep their spirit alive. As a member of our donor family community, you share a valuable perspective that can help others heal and be inspired to register as organ donors. Here are some examples:

- **Share your story.** Share your inspiring story about how organ and tissue donation has brought hope during difficult times.
- **Become an Ambassador.** Lend a helping hand at local speaking engagements, awareness drives and other community projects.
- **Attend a family donor event.** Our events and ceremonies are designed to preserve the legacy of donors and provide a space for healing.

Follow-up Assessment

At LifeGift, we strive to provide the best care to all our donor families. Please consider completing the assessment to let us know about your experience with LifeGift. Any response you provide will help us to improve our care of future donor families.



Rogelio "Roger" Avila,
double lung recipient



Writing to Recipients

The decision to correspond with transplant recipients is a personal one for a donor family. Some wish to share information about their loved one; others want to reach out to a recipient to assist in the grieving process. Whatever the reason – it is your choice whether you wish to correspond with a transplant recipient.

As the organ recovery agency making the donation and subsequent transplant possible, LifeGift can help you with this process – sending written correspondence from you to the transplant center, which will then forward the letter or card to the recipient(s). All correspondence is completely anonymous, and identities are kept confidential – if you so wish.

If you are considering writing to your loved one's transplant recipient(s), LifeGift recommends following these guidelines in your card or letter.

General Information You May Include

- Please do not include last names anywhere in your correspondence.
- Your first name and relationship to the donor
- Your loved one's first name only
- His or her job or occupation
- The state in which your loved one resided
- Your loved one's marital status, children, grandchildren, hobbies, etc.
- You may include a picture of your loved one



Tom O'Driscoll,
organ donor

Conclude Your Letter

- Sign your first name only
- Do not reveal your personal contact information
- Do not reveal the name or location of the hospital where your loved one passed away

Sending Your Correspondence

Place your letter, card or picture in an unsealed envelope within the mailing envelope. Include on a separate sheet of paper the following:

- Your full name
- Your loved one's full name
- Date your loved one passed away
- Hospital where your loved one passed away

Mail Your Correspondence to LifeGift:

Place POSTAGE Here	LifeGift Attention: Donor Family Services Coordinator 2510 Westridge Street Houston, TX 77054
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LifeGift will review your correspondence to ensure confidentiality. We then will forward your letter to the appropriate transplant center or organ procurement organization, which then should send it to the recipient. Please allow several weeks for this process to take place.

About LifeGift

Saving More Lives Together

It's the commitment to those waiting for life-saving and life; enhancing organ and tissue transplants that drives LifeGift to innovate with the mission of saving the lives of men, women and children.

Established in 1987, LifeGift is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization that offers hope to individuals needing transplants in 109 counties in the Southeast, North and West Texas areas. It is a founding member of Donate Life Texas, the organization that manages the statewide organ, eye and tissue donor registry.

Organs and tissue are a precious community resource. LifeGift is an integral part of the health care community helping to manage that resource. Thousands of residents of the areas we serve – and beyond – have had their lives restored by receiving organ and tissue transplants provided through our unique partnerships.

Every Recovered Organ Means Another Life Can Be Saved

LifeGift staff members work with and help train hospital staff members on all aspects of donation, from the appropriate identification and timing of referrals for potential donors to the medical maintenance of the donor and the recovery operation. We ensure that organ and tissue donation is conducted in a fully coordinated and professional manner by expert donation specialists.

For families of donors, we provide information on the donation process, the placement of organs and progress of recipients, and the bereavement process.

Our Organization Blends the Talent and Dedication of Many

Physicians, hospital administrators, community members, donor families, organ and tissue recipients, and LifeGift staff members are all vital to the success of organ and tissue donation.

LifeGift and its partner hospitals seamlessly collaborate to ensure that family members who desire to donate their loved one's organs have the opportunity to do so. Together, we continually seek to develop effective, government-regulated donation systems. In this way, we can ensure that patients desperately waiting for organ and tissue transplants will have access to the precious and critically short supply of these organs and tissues.

Become a LifeGift Ambassador of Hope

LifeGift invites you to consider becoming one of our Ambassadors of Hope. From transplant recipients sharing their stories of life to donor family members revealing the peace of mind they had knowing their loved one's organs would help others live, LifeGift volunteers share hope with the community.

In addition to speaking to civic groups, schools, churches and other organizations, our volunteers represent LifeGift at health fairs and community events, assist with office work, participate in donation events, and interact with the media, under LifeGift's direction.

Ambassadors HOPE

If you're interested in becoming a LifeGift Ambassador of Hope volunteer, please contact:

Southeast Texas – 713.523.4438

North Texas – 817.870.0060

West Texas – 806.798.5568

We Offer Hope

We offer hope to those waiting for organ, eye and tissue transplants, returning them to their families, their jobs, their communities and their lives.

We offer hope to the grieving family members of those who selflessly gave the gift of life so that others may live.

We offer hope to our partner organ procurement organizations throughout the country and the hospitals we serve.

We offer hope to the community through public education outreach and efforts.

We offer hope to transplant recipients, so that they can make the most out of their lives.

Core Values

- **Passionate** – We are driven to contribute to a purpose larger than ourselves.
- **Compassionate** – We have a heart for others.
- **Professional** – We give the best of ourselves in all circumstances, even those that are difficult for us.

How We are different

- **Expertise** – Regardless of our role, we constantly seek opportunities to strengthen our knowledge and sharpen our skills to keep LifeGift on the forefront of organ and tissue donation.
- **Dual Advocacy** – In every situation, we advocate for the donor, ensuring that his/her final wishes are honored, while at the same time, advocate for those who wait for lifesaving transplants..
- **Fiscal Strength** – We are committed to the responsible use of our financial resources, so we can support our communities and prepare for the future.



Monica Emerson,
Donor mother & LifeGift
Ambassador of Hope volunteer

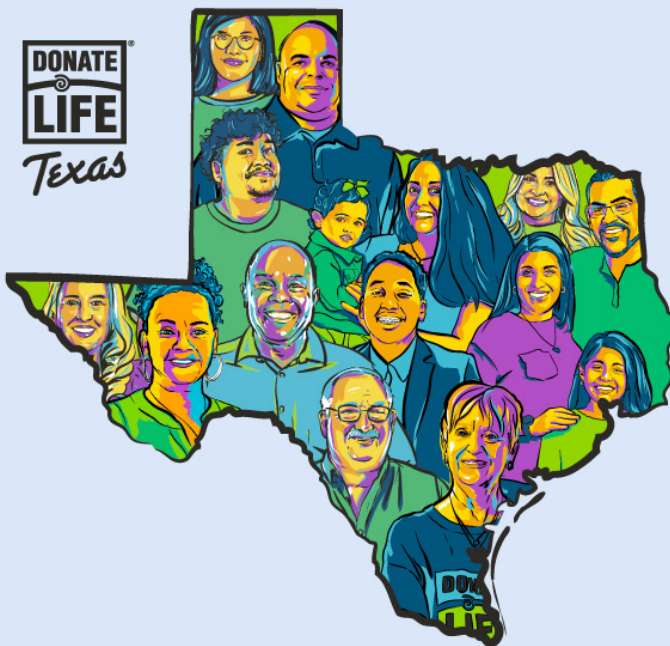
Share and Connect

For more information about LifeGift, call 800-633-6562, visit LifeGift.org or connect with LifeGift online.

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- Check out our YouTube: youtube.com/LifeGift25
- Subscribe to receive our newsletter: LifeGift.org

For more information about Donate Life Texas, visit donatelifetexas.org or connect with Donate Life Texas online.

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- Donate Life Texas QR Code



10K TEXANS
are currently on
the waiting list.