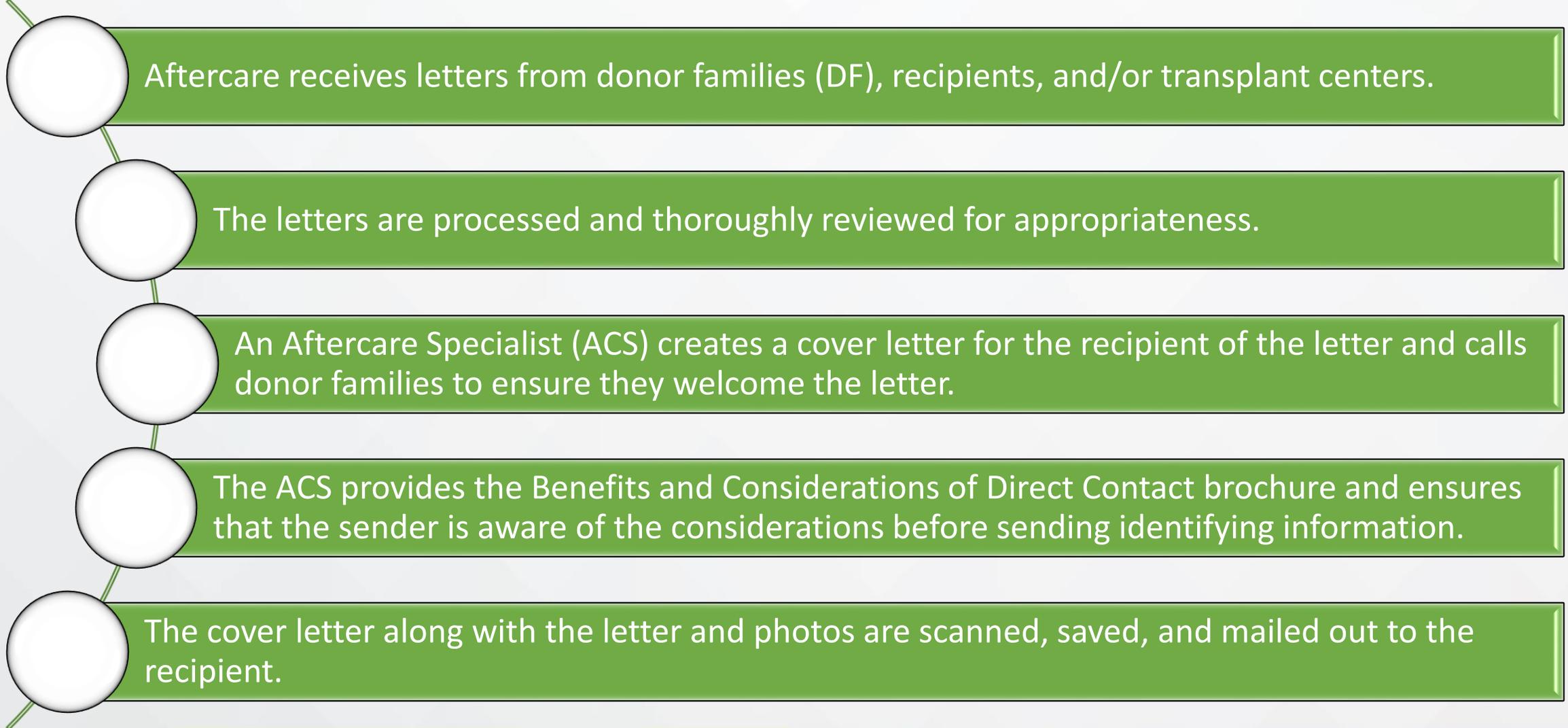


# Donor Family and Recipient Correspondence

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# OneLegacy's Process: Donor Family and Recipient Correspondence



In the year 2020,  
OneLegacy  
received and  
processed a  
total of 1,188  
letters.

Breakdown

- 257 letters from donor families to recipients
- 366 letters from organ recipients to donor families.
  - 80 thank you cards/letters from the OL Writing Packet program.
- 565 from tissue recipients to donor families.

Out of 3,064  
family members  
whose loved-  
one donated in  
2020, only 216  
received  
correspondence  
from a recipient.

OneLegacy  
facilitated 7  
donor family  
and recipient  
meetings (both  
in person and  
virtually).



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# Contact Between Donor Families and Transplant Recipients

## MYTH

Transplant recipients must wait at least one year to contact their donor family.

FACTS →

← MYTHS

## FACT

- There are no waiting periods to correspond or meet a donor family.
- Comfort levels vary.
- The sooner recipients write, the more likely we are to forward their correspondence.

*We contact each donor family prior to forwarding correspondence to ensure they welcome the letter.*

# Contact Between Donor Families and Transplant Recipients

## MYTH

Recipient letters should be collected and held until there is a group of letters to send.

## MYTH

A letter from a donor family to their recipient should be held until that recipient attends a clinic appointment.

FACTS →

← MYTHS

## FACT

- Forwarding letters as you receive them reduces the risk of the letters getting misplaced or filed away.
- Please forward the letters within 2 weeks of receiving.
- We recommend keeping copies of the letters sent in their file should it get lost in the mail and/or for future use if needed.

## FACT

- Time is precious to donor families and recipients that want to connect.



# Contact Between Donor Families and Transplant Recipients

## MYTH

It is not a good idea for a transplant recipient and a donor family to meet.

FACTS →

← MYTHS

## FACT

- In our experience, meetings between donor families and recipients are a positive experience for both parties.
- A trained member of the DFAC team screens both parties, does an in-depth assessment, explores expectations, and addresses any questions prior to any meetings.
- Though donor families and recipients can meet on their own, we always recommend a trained OneLegacy representative at a first-time meeting to assist in facilitating.

# Partnerships with Transplant Centers: Recipient Writing Folders



# What's Included In Our Recipient Writing Folders



The decision to write to your donor family is very personal. Some recipients have told us that they do not have the right words to express how they feel and find writing difficult. There are no wrong words - even a simple thank you is appreciated. We hope these guidelines help with the process of writing to your donor family.

#### Should I write to my donor family?

The majority of our donor families tell us that they hope to hear from their loved one's recipient. Hearing appreciation from you brings them comfort and confirms that their loved one's gift was helpful and meaningful. Donor family members do not want recipients to feel guilty that they are alive, but rather they hope that their decision to donate has positively affected someone's life.

There is no minimum time frame or waiting period. You may write as soon as you are ready, and we recommend writing sooner than later because as more time passes, it may become more difficult for us to locate your donor family.

If you choose to write, you may send a letter or card or submit a note via our website. A simple thank you card will be appreciated, and we have cards available if needed.

#### Share something about yourself and your family:

- Write information you feel comfortable sharing which may include marital status, children, hobbies, occupation, or interests.
- If you wish to meet them, include this in your letter.
- If you wish to stay anonymous in your first letter:
  - Avoid using last names, city or street addresses and names of hospitals or physicians
  - Include first names only and sign only your first name
  - You may include the state in which you live and photos if you wish
  - Otherwise, the donor family may find and reach out to you without going through OneLegacy or your transplant center
- Please be sensitive about whether or not to include religious comments because the donor family's religion is unknown.

#### Talk about your transplant experience:

- Use simple language to explain how the transplant has improved your health and life.
- Recognize the donor family's generosity and thank them for their loved one's gift of life.
- Describe how long you waited for a transplant and the impact the transplant has had on your family.
- Keep it simple and avoid too many medical details about your course of treatment.



#### Submitting your letter or card:

- Submit a note online via [www.onelegacy.org/forms/aftercare/donor\\_contact.html](http://www.onelegacy.org/forms/aftercare/donor_contact.html).

#### For mailing:

- Do not seal the envelope of the card or letter.
- Include a separate piece of paper with your full name, the date of your transplant, transplant center, your phone number and email address so we may contact you if we have questions. This will not be forwarded to your donor family.
- Place all items in an outer envelope and mail or deliver them to your transplant center. If you are certain OneLegacy managed your donor, feel free to send it directly to us.

#### Once your letter is received:

- The transplant center will forward your letter to OneLegacy's Donor Family Aftercare team (or the organization who worked with your donor family). This process may take weeks or months depending on the transplant center.
- A member of the Donor Family Aftercare team will review the letter, and then contact the donor family to inform them the letter has been received.
- If OneLegacy is unable to forward your letter for any reason, a scanned copy will be kept on file and you or your transplant center will be informed.
- You may follow-up directly with OneLegacy to confirm your letter has been received.

## SAMPLE LETTER

Here is a sample letter with ideas to help you begin writing. This is intended as a resource and you should not feel that you have to follow the suggestions given. You may choose to write when you feel ready. There is no specific waiting period you need to follow.

Dear Donor Family,

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_ (first name only). I have tried many times to write a letter to you, but never felt that I could find the right words. I am the grateful recipient of your loved one's \_\_\_\_ (organ).

Whenever I think about my transplant, I remember that you experienced significant loss. For that I am very, very sorry. \_\_\_\_\_

Offer your condolences for the family's loss. Consider expressing gratitude that they chose to donate during a difficult time.

I am married and have \_\_\_\_ children...  
I am single and have a dog...  
I am in the \_\_\_\_ grade and... \_\_\_\_\_

Tell the donor family a little about yourself, your family and what kinds of things you enjoy doing.

The reason I needed a transplant was... \_\_\_\_\_

Brief explanation is preferred.

Prior to my transplant I wasn't able to participate in... \_\_\_\_\_  
Now I am able to enjoy...

Tell the family how you felt prior to the transplant and how you are doing now. Is there something you're able to do now that you were not able to do in the recent past? How does your family feel now that you've received the transplant?

I think about my donor every day...  
I pray for my donor and your family...  
Every time I'm able to walk around the block...

End letter with a sentence or two about how you feel about your donor.

**Sign your first name only.**

Social Media Advice On Back



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## SOCIAL MEDIA

If you receive a letter from your donor family, **please be considerate to the author of the letter and do not share** any correspondence on social media, unless the person who wrote the letter is in agreement.

**Please do not use social media to contact your donor family** until you have had written correspondence and mutually agree to direct contact. While you may believe you have found the right family, mistakes have happened in the past. If you are contacted by someone who thinks you are their recipient, please do not respond until you contact OneLegacy so we can assist you on how to proceed. See contact information below.

For the initial correspondence between you and your donor family, **it is preferred that correspondence be done through OneLegacy** so as to avoid any misunderstanding or miscommunications between recipients, donor families and your transplant center.

OneLegacy | 221 S. Figueroa St. #500 | 800-423-7220  
Donor Family Aftercare | Los Angeles, CA 90012 | familycare@onelegacy.org



### Identifiers for Correspondence

This information will only be used to match you to the correct donor family. It will not be forwarded on to the donor family or used for any other purposes. **Place this with your card in the unsealed envelope.** Thank you!

Your Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Your Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Your Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Organ Received: \_\_\_\_\_ Transplant Ctr: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Transplant Date: \_\_\_\_\_

OneLegacy is the Organ Procurement Organization that supports donor families in the southern California area. The Aftercare Department will forward your correspondence on to the correct donor family.



### Donor Family Aftercare

(800) 423-7220 Office  
familycare@onelegacy.org

saving lives through organ, eye & tissue donation



221 South Figueroa Street, Suite 500  
Los Angeles, CA 90012



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# Call To Action

“They are waiting to hear from you and they are so grateful to you. My experience has helped me so much and I only regret it taking me so long to respond. Even just saying hello is better than nothing.”

-OneLegacy Ambassador (Donor Family)

“When I wrote my thank you letter I basically let the family know how life was before I received the Gift from their loved one. I wrote how Cystic Fibrosis was slowly taking my life from me. I let them know how their Gift gave me hope for a brighter future.”

OneLegacy Ambassador (Recipient)

“It is truly the very least a recipient can do. It is a form of "thank you" note for the most amazing gift of a lifetime. I believe that we as recipients have a duty to write and honor the selflessness of the donor and their loved ones.”

OneLegacy Ambassador (Recipient)

Together  
We Grow

*We need YOUR help to change our current culture and your commitment to guide and inform recipients on the importance of sending a simple, Thinking of you sentiment.*



# Thank You