



# HEALING THE SPIRIT



## Dear Donor Families,

Donor Family Services is working hard to plan ceremonies that will support you and your family as well as help shine the light of hope during the darkness of grief. The dates for some of the 2022 *In Celebration & Remembrance* ceremonies are listed to the right. Please mark your calendars and join us as we honor those we have lost and the gifts they have given.

In this edition, we are focusing on how you can tell the story of your loved one. Mitch Albom said, "Sharing tales of those we've lost is how we keep from really losing them." By telling the story of your loved one, it keeps their memory alive. If you are ready and want to share your loved one's story with others, I encourage you to let us know. More information regarding this opportunity is listed in the article, "The Power of Healing Stories" in this edition of the newsletter.

With hope,

Debbie Hutt, DFS Director

If you would like more information on any Donor Family Service Programs, please contact us.

800.847.8731 | DFS@lifenethealth.org

Winter 2022

1-800-847-7831 | healingthespirit.org



## UPCOMING EVENTS

**We are monitoring the current COVID-19 situation. All in-person events are dependent upon COVID-19 protocols. Please check our website for times and updates for these events.**

### In Celebration & Remembrance Events

**April 3: Virginia Beach, VA**  
Norfolk Botanical Gardens

**April 24: Richmond, VA**  
Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens

**May 15: Roanoke, VA**  
Hotel Roanoke

Dates for events in FL and in the NW areas will be announced later.

### An Updated Newsletter Format is Coming!

Our next Donor Family Quarterly Newsletter will be in a new format which will include clickable links to stories and other resources. If you prefer to still receive a hardcopy version of the newsletter, and you have not already contacted us to let us know, please email:

[aimee\\_evans@lifenethealth.org](mailto:aimee_evans@lifenethealth.org)

### Free Pre-recorded Webinars by TAPS (The TAPS Institute for Hope and Healing)

**From Grief to Peace:  
Journaling for Life After Loss**  
<https://www.taps.org/video/2021/grief-journaling>

**Passed and Present:  
Keeping Memories of Loves Ones Alive**  
<https://www.taps.org/videos/2018/passed-present>

## Healing Tears



**Dear Dr. Leary:**

***I really want to tell the story of my son. How can I honor his memory and my memories of him? Sincerely, A Grieving Mother***

**Dear Grieving Mother:**

There are many ways to remember your son and remind others of the legacy. However, you choose to share your heart, and his life, keep in mind that there is no one right way to share your expression of love and the meaning of his life. These are your memories and the meaning of how he made a difference. The process of remembering, understanding, and sharing his life may be far more important than the actual content of the story. The story or tribute, however you decide to share it, is a reflection that he was in the world and was important.

*If you are not a writer or storyteller, you might*

- *Dedicate an event to his memory, such as creating a bike race if he was a mountain biker, or begin a fund raiser in his name such as collecting food if he helped the homeless.*
- *Build something that reflects what he cared about.*
- *Name something after him or leave something for others to enjoy; you might plant a tree with his name on a plaque or create a memorial garden in his name if he was a gardener; work on a trail named in his honor if he was a hiker; adopt a star in his name if he was interested in astronomy. All of these reminders could include a story of who he was and how this reminds you of him.*
- *Support a cause that was close to his heart; contribute financially or in service to advocate and donate to a non-profit that reflects his interest like teaching guitar lessons to children without the means for music lessons.*
- *Find ways to perform random acts of kindness for a stranger, holding the vision that you are doing it for him and in his stead.*
- *Keep a trinket, a piece of jewelry, or symbol of him that can begin a conversation about him. Some mourners have their loved one's name tattooed on their body or have a sticker on their car with his name on it.*

*If you would like to share who he was and what he meant to you through stories you can*

- *Start a new tradition that reminds you of him, that creates conversation and elicits memories; for example, you might form a book club that includes his favorite books so that you can tell stories of what they meant to him.*
- *Self-publish a book of stories and photographs to reflect his values, contributions, and personality. Include anecdotes, stories, details, and insights from family, friends, and co-workers.*
- *Include his milestones, accomplishments and favorite memories, reflections of him from his own words from his writing, letters, poems, or quotes.*

- Create a blog or add to existing memory websites (see resources below)

To begin, you might start writing a letter to him to get in touch with emotions and retrieve old memories. Begin by free-form writing, allowing yourself to write through a stream of consciousness without editing or critiquing. Gather your memories and recall those things he was passionate about; what you will miss most about him; how he changed your life. Gather others' memories; visit with others who knew him and shared parts of his life that might be outside of your homelife. Write out specific stories with specific details that answer the questions "who was my son?" and "how am I different because he was in the world?"

There are many resources already available to guide you: Connect to the links below to see the templates and examples of others who have shared reflections of their loved ones.

- [Writeabookin7days.com](http://Writeabookin7days.com)
- [Storyworth.com](http://Storyworth.com)
- [Writer-out-loud.com](http://Writer-out-loud.com)
- [Legacy.com](http://Legacy.com)
- [Thelegacyrecorder.com](http://Thelegacyrecorder.com)
- Blogs: [onthewaytowhereyouregoing.com](http://onthewaytowhereyouregoing.com)

**May the memories bring you peace,**

**Lani**

Lani Leary, Ph.D., specializes in work with chronically ill, dying and bereaved clients. Dr. Leary has worked for the past 25 years as a psychotherapist in private practice and in six hospices across the country.

Have a question for Dr. Leary? Contact Aimee Evans at [aimee\\_evans@lifenethealth.org](mailto:aimee_evans@lifenethealth.org).



## A Recipient Story

**Anna Eggink | Tissue Recipient**

**Forever grateful for the selfless gift**

After surviving a scary incident where both of her knees dislocated, Anna could no longer walk. Luckily, her orthopedic surgeon recommended to Anna the use of donor allografts for both of her knee surgeries. Using the gift of donated tissue prevented Anna from having to go through additional procedures to recover and transplant her own tissues that would weaken other areas of her body and require additional healing. By choosing donor allografts, she could use all of her energy to focus on healing her knees.

Within months of completing both surgeries, Anna was going out for runs. She was free of the fear that her knees would give out. This sense of peace was, and continues to be, priceless. She feels forever grateful for the selfless gift from the donor that made this all possible. Being able to participate in the Share the Love 5K LifeNet Health Foundation event was special to her because she was both an ambassador for donation and a runner with fully functioning knees as a result of her transplants.

Anna has been an advocate for the mission of donation by sharing her story and speaking to educate and inspire. She continually shares the message that transplantation can save lives, restore health and give hope to others.



## The Journey

### The Power of Healing Stories

**Michael Jones** *LifeNet Health Donor Family Advocate*

After we lose someone that we love, the memories of them become a priceless treasure. It is a need of mourners to remember the person that died. Sharing what your loved one meant to you with others not only helps their memory live on, it also can be therapeutic on your path to healing.

LifeNet Health's "Stories of Hope" allow donor families to tell us who their loved one was, honor their selfless act of love, talk about their grief journey and how the decision to donate has brought them hope. The story of your loved one will be told as you want to tell it. You can talk about their job, hobbies, achievements, interests, something funny they did, what they were like growing up or just simply how they made you feel. Your loved one and your feelings towards them will be treated with dignity and the upmost respect.

Memories are not meant to fade, but to continue on and on. Please reach out when you are ready to do so. There is no timetable for a hope story. It does not matter how short or long it has been since someone died. What matters is the preservation of that person's legacy and allowing the right moment for the family to talk about it. Being interviewed is the beginning and not the end when it comes to remembering your loved one. We recognize that this is an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with donor families and allow them to continue to find the right avenues for healing and sharing precious memories.

When you visit Stories of Hope you will not only see donor family stories, but also those of grateful transplant recipients and their family members.

If you would like to tell your story or receive more information, please contact Michael V. Jones at 757-609-4412 [michaelv\\_jones@lifenethealth.org](mailto:michaelv_jones@lifenethealth.org) in Virginia or Florida, or Aimee Evans at 425-981-8918 [aimee\\_evans@lifenethealth.org](mailto:aimee_evans@lifenethealth.org) in the Pacific Northwest.

See more Stories of Hope online <https://www.lifenethealth.org/live/stories-hope>.

**LifeNet Health offers opportunities for families who have walked their own grief journey to be trained as Grief Companions. LifeNet Health Grief Companions are not counselors, but empathic donor family members who have been trained to listen. Grief Companions are paired with other donor family members who are seeking emotional support and encouragement. Grief Companions understand the unique experience of grief, and support others as they mourn. If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, please contact our Donor Family Service Department at: 800-847-7831.**