



*Tissue and Eye*  
DONATION



*“What you LEAVE BEHIND is not what is ENGRAVED in STONE monuments, but what is WOVEN into the LIVES of OTHERS.”*

– Pericles

*At this time* of sadness and loss, we offer our sympathy. We hope you find comfort in knowing your loved one may help others through the donation of their tissue, eyes or both.

Donation is an act of great compassion and generosity, and it leaves a profound legacy. Through their extraordinary gifts, your loved one will provide others with renewed hope, healing and the chance to reclaim a full and vibrant life.

As a donor family, you will receive support from LifeSource in the months and years to come, including grief resources, opportunities to participate in remembrance events and to connect with other grieving families whose loved ones gave the gift of life. Please know that you, your family and your loved one will not be forgotten.

Our Donor Family Advocates are here to support you in your grief journey and answer any questions you may have. They may be reached by calling 1.888.536.6283 or by email at [familyservices@life-source.org](mailto:familyservices@life-source.org).

## Helping Others

Surgeons transplant donated tissue and eyes to save and heal the lives of their patients. Donated *bone* can help relieve pain and restore mobility in patients suffering from bone damage or loss due to cancer, trauma or disease. *Connective tissue* may be transplanted to repair knee ligaments and restore the ability to walk, or in reconstructive surgery in patients with facial deformity. Donated *skin* may help patients in need of reconstructive surgery for abdominal wall repair, facial trauma, deep burns, or post mastectomy following breast cancer. Transplanted *veins* and *arteries* can give patients the ability to walk again, restore circulation and save limbs at risk of amputation. Donated *heart valves* may save children born with heart defects and can help adults with damaged valves, allowing them to resume normal lives. For someone facing blindness, *eye* donation can restore or preserve vision. Scientists and researchers can use donated eyes and tissues to discover new medications, surgical techniques or cures for diseases that have the potential to help future patients.

# The Donation Process

LifeSource team members are honored to have worked with your family at the time of your loved one's generous gift of donation. Here is a brief overview of what occurred at the time of donation.

## Hospital

The donation process began after all efforts to save your loved one's life were exhausted and death was declared by medical professionals. The team of doctors and professionals who cared for your loved one were not involved with tissue and eye donation authorization or recovery.

## Opportunity for Donation

Our LifeSource team worked with medical professionals to determine opportunities for tissue and eye donation based on your loved one's medical history.

## Authorization for Donation

If your loved one made the decision to be a donor, we helped honor their decision. Your loved one may have documented their decision by checking the box on their driver's license or state ID card, registering in an online donor registry, or through an advanced directive.

If your loved one did not make a decision about donation, you were asked to make a decision about donation on their behalf. LifeSource team members worked with you and your family to complete questions about your loved one's medical and social history in order to ensure the safety and viability of their tissue or eyes for transplant.

## Tissue & Eye Recovery

Your loved one's donated tissue was recovered by specialists in a surgical suite or hospital operating room. If your loved one was an eye donor, eyes were recovered by highly trained technicians. Great care and respect was shown to your loved one during and after recovery.

## Tissue & Eye Preparation

After recovery, your loved one's gifts were sent to one of our partners responsible for preparing the tissue or eyes and determining whether or not they are safe for transplant. They, in turn, will share these prepared gifts with a medical facility where the transplant will be performed.

Because the guidelines for tissue and eye donation and transplantation are very strict, many tests and medical reviews are required. Based on the outcomes of these reviews, some tissues or eyes may be deemed not suitable for transplant. This extensive medical review may take many months to complete, resulting in donated tissue being transplanted a year or more after donation. It is through this comprehensive process that we can continue to help the thousands of patients awaiting transplant.

## Transplant Outcomes

Enclosed with this brochure is a letter from LifeSource explaining what gifts were donated and how they may help individuals in need. Please know that your loved one's donation was managed with great care, integrity and expertise in the hopes of providing the best possible outcome for your family and the potential recipients.

## Tissue Recipient Correspondence

Since the reporting of tissue recipient information by hospitals is voluntary, personal information is unavailable and you may not hear from your loved one's tissue recipients. Preparing donated tissue for transplant is an extensive process and we may not have information about your loved one's gift for up to five years. Please be assured, your loved one's generosity will always be remembered by those whose lives are restored.

## Eye Recipient Correspondence

Eye tissue can be transplanted up to two weeks following donation. You are welcome to write to your loved one's eye recipient(s) at any time. Please forward your correspondence to LifeSource and we will ensure it is forwarded to our partner organization who, in turn, will forward to your loved one's recipient(s). In some cases, we learn that recovered eye tissue is not able suitable for transplant. In these cases, your loved one's gifts may have been shared for research or training to help further the health of future patients.

## LifeSource: Who We Are

LifeSource is a non-profit organization dedicated to saving and healing through organ, eye and tissue donation in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and parts of western Wisconsin.

For the families we serve, LifeSource pays all costs related to tissue and eye donation. If you receive a bill related to donation, please contact us as soon as possible. You can reach us by calling **1.888.536.6283** or by email at [familyservices@life-source.org](mailto:familyservices@life-source.org).



## Andrew Erickson

These days, Andrew Erickson has a lot to carry.

That's not a metaphor: he has a lot to carry between his young daughter Harriet and twins Gus and Louie. As a father, Andrew picks up, holds, helps,

comforts, and carries his three kids countless times every day.

Andrew can thank someone else for his steady stance and strong legs to hold up his sweet kids. He received the gift of a ligament from a tissue donor in 2012.

During a broom ball game, Andrew had a bad swing. His knee went one way, the broom another, and eventually Andrew landed at the hospital. His knee had already been injured in another sporting accident a few years earlier, and this new twist meant he would need to replace his torn ligament.

In October of 2012, Andrew received a very special gift from someone he would never meet. That gift, from a compassionate person who chose to be a tissue donor, would return Andrew to walking, working, and being active. After his surgery, taking good care of his new ligament and his healing knee, Andrew decided to thank his donor family in a letter.

To Andrew, he felt the need to say thank you. To express gratitude at what he felt was a special gift. And to tell them that their loved one's legacy mattered to him, in particular, and that the gift was important to him and his family.

As an RN in the Neuro-Medical ICU, Andrew cares for many patients. As a father and husband, he cares for his family. As a recipient, he cares for a gift he received from someone he would never meet. Every time he walks down a hall to a patient, or puts a baby in a crib—he can thank his donor. And he does.



# LifeSource

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