

AUTUMN 2024



## Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter.

It was a pleasure to see so many members at our precious gift event at the National Memorial Arboretum in September. Almost 200 people braved the awful weather to join us in the celebration of organ donation and transplantation. Donor families and recipients and their families had the opportunity to come together and share experiences.

Double lung recipient Helen Wilson started the event for us by presenting the donor flowers and reading a poem "Thanks to You".

Three speakers kindly attended the event:—

Jess Cooper, who lost her husband whilst her two children were very young told us how she helps other young families and gives them a pack of useful information, including a book entitled *The Invisible String*, which explains how we are forever attached to our loved ones even after death.

Dr Paul Harden, transplant consultant and Chair of Transplant Sport was our guest speaker and spoke about his work with kidney patients.

Recipient Louise Prashad spoke about her journey as a liver recipient. Louise is a passionate advocate of organ donation and honours her donor Sarah by sharing her story. She is proud to have been selected once again to represent Team GB at the World Transplant Games in Dresden in 2025.

Everyone was invited to light a candle in memory of their loved one or donor. This is always an emotional part of the annual event.

We are always honoured when so many families allow us to show photographs of their loved ones on our scroll of donors which runs throughout the afternoon.



DONOR FAMILY NETWORK

# CONNEXIONS

Registered charity  
1098781



The  
Gift of Life  
Memorial

**Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can offer you support at any time.**



**Our grateful thanks go to all those who have kindly  
donated to the Charity or raised funds for us:**

Thankyou to our regular donors:

Patrick Gallagher	A Heron
Darren Cox	J Fletcher
Keith Astbury	S Hall
Pauline McDonnell	Roger Quick
Esther Watt-Jones	Paul White

Donations have also been received from:

Bird & Co Solicitors

Denise Devine on the first anniversary of the Gift of Life given by Robert Gudgin

In memory of Stuart Luxton

In memory of Mark Slater

In memory of Tim Cook



Sarah Hickman- who holds an annual fund raising event in favour of the Donor Family Network, in memory of her daughter Georgi

Sharon Elliott- in memory of her brother Mark Ingram. Mark's golfing friends (Woodys) held an event in favour of the charity.

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Donations have been received through Much Loved in memory of donors:

# much loved

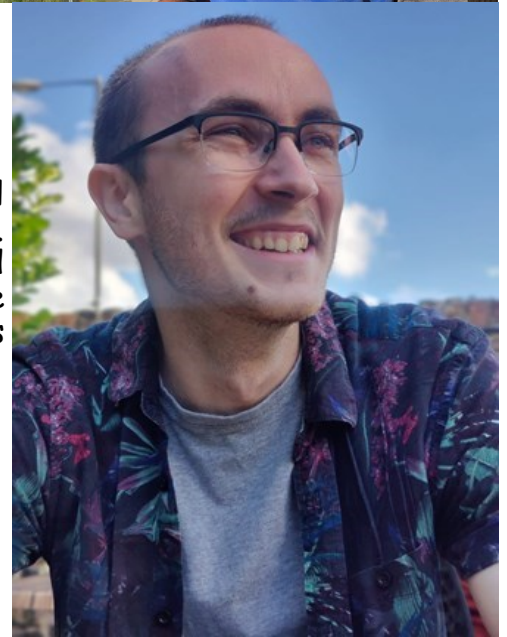
## Tim Cook

His support page says, "As you all know Tim passed away suddenly and unexpectedly earlier this year. The Donor Family Network were a great comfort and support to Carolyn and the family at the most difficult time. We'd like to raise some money to help them continue their great work while remembering Tim. A charity golf day feels like the perfect way to do this given Tim was so passionate about the sport".



## James Decker

his family said, "James was the kindest, most thoughtful and gentlest son, brother, uncle and friend there could be. He has left an incredible legacy of memories. James died suddenly from an unexpected heart attack. However, we are comforted by the fact that he was able to donate his organs and save the lives of four others".



## Fiona Thomas

Fiona passed away in July 2024 and gave the Gift of Life. Alongside the Much Loved page a funeral collection was also held and the proceeds were received by the Donor Family Network.

Fiona's family say, "Fiona was a devoted mum of Megan and Jade, loving daughter of Stephanie and John and dear sister of Alexandra. She will be so sadly missed by all her family and friends and remembered for her ever generous nature".

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JustGiving™



**The Trustees are forever grateful for the fund raising efforts of our many supporters through Just Giving pages which currently include:**

**Zara Gillespie** set up a page to raise funds in memory of Stevie. Along with family members and the Organ Donation Northern Ireland Team she climbed Slieve Donard.



On her fundraising page **Karen Piotr** says,

"I'm doing a special walk as part of Turn the Peaks Pink challenge for organ donation week. I will be part of a group of 65 people walking up Scafell Pike in our pink tee-shirts, to highlight the importance of organ donation and taking 2 minutes to have the conversation and reconfirming your decision on the organ donation register. My husband Mark helped 8 people have the amazing second chance of life. I'm doing this walk for them and in particular for Pete and Adam whom I have met. I'm doing this for all the transplant recipients I know and their amazing stories. I'm doing this for all other donor families who make the hardest decision in honouring their loved ones wishes so that transplants can happen."

**Marilyn North** kindly set up a Just Giving page to raise funds for the Donor Family Network in memory of Lesley Gray.

She and her team walked all of the Thames bridges in London -a total of 43,000 steps!



On her Just Giving page **Helen Fort** says,

"Along with my sister-in-law and a few friends we are each hoping to run/walk 100k in October to raise some funds for the Donor Family Network. Sadly we lost our amazing sister Rosie in 2017. Rosie had cystic fibrosis and was lucky enough to receive a double lung transplant which gave her a new lease of life. Everyone knew Rosie for her passionate and loving attitude toward life. She was a true advocate for organ donation and went on to donate her kidneys to give two others their second shot at life."



## Sid Lamb

The sun shone at Scalm Park, near Selby on 5th October for the President's annual golf day.

Sid Lamb had his heart transplant 20 years ago at the Freeman Hospital, Newcastle thanks to a generous donor and their family. There were two false alarms before the successful transplant and following his recovery Sid embraced the spirit of Transplant Sport and competed in many British, European and World Transplant Games. He has a wonderful cabinet full of medals he has won in golf, shotput and even the 100m sprint, something he is extremely proud of.

Sid now dedicates his time to raising the profile of transplant related charities by holding his annual golf day around the anniversary of his transplant, funds raised going to a variety of transplant charities.



The golf day is always generously supported by his family and friends, local businesses and attendees, who enjoy the competition, raffle, great food and entertainment.

This year, 144 players were involved, using golf balls sponsored by the Donor Family Network.

Donor Family Network Trustee Karen went along to represent the charity.

The Network is extremely grateful to Sid and wife Carol for their generous donations over the years.

**Mahmud Nawaz** shares his experience of organ donation in loving memory of his wife Sharon.

Mahmud and Sharon married in October 2002, looking forward to a long future together. However, less than two years later and at only 32 years old, Sharon suffered a brain haemorrhage on 15th March 2004, collapsing at home whilst getting ready for work. Mahmud tells us:

"The ambulance arrived really quickly, they tried to resuscitate her without success and she was rushed to Bradford Royal Infirmary whilst the doctors worked frantically. Then they came out and told me there was nothing more they could do and had I considered organ donation. I was devastated and felt so alone."

Fortunately the couple had already discussed organ donation.

Mahmud continues, "Of course the answer was yes. Sharon was passionate about organ donation. My wife prepared me for making a decision at the worst possible time by telling me her wishes beforehand. Sharon was moved to Intensive Care, where the staff were amazing, showing such care for her and indeed for me. The following day the doctors did the brain stem tests. They confirmed that Sharon had suffered a traumatic brain haemorrhage. Her death was peaceful—just 50 years too early.

Sharon's organ donation was successful. Although her heart and lungs could not be used her kidneys and liver (split into two) saved four people, including a toddler who was critically ill. Sharon loved children—she would have been very proud of this."

Since then, Mahmud has committed himself to advocating for organ donation. He joined the Organ Donation Committees in Leeds and Mid-Yorkshire, became an Organ Donation Ambassador in 2018 and is now Chair at Chesterfield Royal Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.



He says, "this was Sharon's gift, not mine, to donate her organs—my memorial to her is to spread the word about organ donation and share my story and try to encourage everyone to register and tell their loved ones their wishes."

Mahmud has also got involved with the British Transplant Games, partnered with Westfield Health, a celebration of life bringing together the transplant community, being initially involved by being on the stakeholder board for the Games in Leeds in 2022.

He concludes, " I now attend the British Transplant Games which celebrates the success of transplantation. At the British Transplant Games 2023 in Coventry I had the honour of leading out the donor family team at the Opening Ceremony.

I am delighted to have exchanged letters this year with the boy Sharon saved, now of course in his early 20's. It is amazing to have that experience".



*Mahmud's first act for the Chesterfield Royal NHS Foundation Trust was to open a memorial to donors at the hospital*

*Mahmud recently appeared on BBC Breakfast to promote organ and tissue donation.*

# Organ Donation Week



Many donor families, transplant recipients and NHS Blood and Transplant staff "turned the peaks pink" for Organ Donation week.

They climbed to the top of five peaks across the UK, including Ben Nevis in Scotland, Snowden in Wales and Scafell Pike in England.



Stands were arranged in many stores and hospitals where volunteers spoke to the public, encouraging them to talk to their families and numerous iconic buildings were lit up pink.



## The NHS Organ

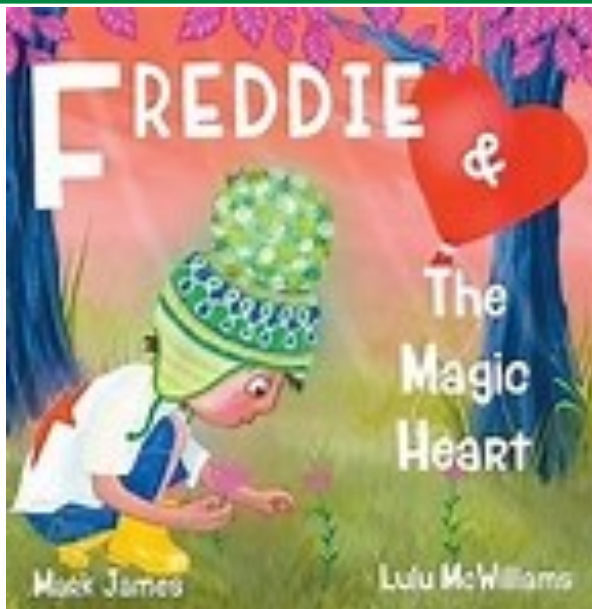
**Donation Register** was launched in 1994 following a five year campaign. An advertising campaign persuading people to join the register was launched. Advertisements were placed in national and local newspapers and leaflets explaining the



scheme were delivered to more than 19 million households.

The existence of the ODR has not only saved countless lives but has fostered a culture of generosity and compassion.





Specialist Nurse for Organ Donation, **Mark Ainsborough** has written a children's book, **Freddie and the Magic Heart**, with the aim of educating children about organ donation.

The story is about a young boy called Freddie who's mother is very ill. Freddie's dad tells him how his mum can still help someone by donating her heart.

Mark says: 'I just felt strongly that I wanted to write it down and see if it could be useful for someone. It helps young children understand that, even though they don't want to lose their loved one, if it can help others, sharing those special parts of themselves with someone who needs it can be a beautiful thing'.

Freddie and the Magic Heart was self published through crowd funding, which raised £2,500, allowing copies of it to be sent to all organ donation centres in the country.

All profits from the book sales are coming to the Donor Family Network. We have recently received a payment relating to royalties from the book and are very grateful to Mark.

(A copy of the book can be borrowed from the DFN library. See our website for details).

**IMT Medical** are NHS Blood and Transplant's contracted transport provider for the UK's transportation of National Organ Retrieval Service (NORS) Teams, transplant organs & tissue and NHSBT personnel by land, sea and air. One of their drivers gives an account of his work:

"Nearly 17 years ago my enthusiasm for life was put to the test, when I developed kidney disease and I needed a transplant. I had to dialyse three times a day which was hard but I was determined to get thorough it! Unbeknown to me my wife was looking to become my donor and on 4th October 2012 I received my transplant.

Fast forward to today:

I have had the opportunity to give something back to this wonderful gift of life achieved through organ donation and today I work for IMT Medical Transport Limited as an organ donation driver. My role takes me back to the start of my journey and when I visit a hospital to either collect or drop off human organs, it is an extremely emotional experience for me for obvious reasons. An experience, which whilst emotional is so rewarding.

This role is not just about driving, there are a range of skills needed and amongst the safe and careful driving standards we have to be physically fit (loading and unloading), be able to navigate around great Britain and keep up to a schedule on the timings (ensuring what I have on board arrives on time), customer service skills (especially with NHS staff) and organisation skills. This is all brought together via our communications hub where the key is communication."



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**The WOODMORE'S** have kindly set up a Just Giving page to raise some money in memory of Simon Woodmore. They climbed the Yorkshire Three Peaks, a classic trekking challenge in the Yorkshire Dales, summiting Pen-y-ghent (694m), Whernside (736m) and Ingleborough (723m) in less than 12 hours!

Simon's wife Michelle tells us more:

"Simon lived life to the full and I'm so grateful for the memories we have. We met when I was 19, a student nurse and he was a paramedic. We were married in 1995 just after my 21st birthday and blessed with two wonderful children, Gemma in 2001 and James in 2004.

Simon trained to be a vicar alongside working full time with the ambulance service. This led him to volunteer at a local prison in the pastoral department. He also volunteered with SARAID, a search and rescue charity who deploy around the world when disaster strikes.



He also helped with homeless charities and giving vaccinations to refugees in Calais. He was a very special person!

Simon was only 51 when he suddenly collapsed at home in September 2020 with a large stroke. He was blue lighted to our local hospital then transferred to London where he deteriorated. He sadly never regained consciousness and as we were in the middle of covid we were not allowed to be with him. Three days later we were allowed to visit to say goodbye.



It was at this stage that we were approached by the Organ Donor Team. Simon and I had discussed donation and I knew he was on the register. It made sense as he had given so much to others during his life. He was able to donate everything except his lungs which was great.

My son did a year of fund raising events for Simon which finished in July 2022 with the first Walk4Woody.

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We decided to do a sponsored walk each year to raise money for different charities in Simon's name. This year, for our 3rd Walk4Woody a group of family and friends completed the Yorkshire Three Peaks on Saturday 4th September and raised money for the Donor Family Network.

It was a really tough challenge and of the 17 walkers who started, 10 managed all three peaks. I did the 1st and 3rd peak which meant starting with the group at 5.45am and finishing with them at 6.30pm. I was very ill with long covid so this was a great achievement for me.

The annual walks are a lovely way to bring family and friends together, to remember Simon and raise funds for charities."



## 'HUGGA'

Many of our donor families will have received a purple 'Hugga' at the time of donation, a gift from the Donor Family Network. We asked for feedback on these and Kate wrote:

"I can't remember how I initially found out about the Donor Family Network, the day Dad died was so emotional. I think it may have been a leaflet in some paperwork we received after his donation. I was immediately attracted to connecting with the network and filled in the online form. In a wonderful serendipity, the welcome pack, including the 'Hugga', arrived on day of my Dad's funeral. Even more significant, the colour purple—this was a significant colour in relation to Dad. It really felt like a hug arriving in the post. I was highly anxious and extremely emotional and I sat at the end of my bed hugging the 'Hugga'. I slept with it for many nights. It has become symbolic for me. A reminder of Dad's gift, that through my grief could bring a tiny iota of hope. I think it's a brilliant and kind gift. It means a lot to me and has brought me a lot of comfort, and is by or in my bed most of the time."





## The success of the British Transplant Games

Following a very successful British Transplant Games in Nottingham in August we can now look forward to next year's Games which will be held in Oxford from 31st July to 3rd August 2025. The opening event, donor run and some of the sports will be held at Blenheim Palace, where there will be plenty of time to explore the grounds and the Palace. Accommodation will be in and around Oxford so if you are intending to join us please contact our Team Manager Jim on [jim@jimfallow.plus.com](mailto:jim@jimfallow.plus.com) to express an interest. Final commitment will not be needed until May next year.

The stats above show the tremendous impact of the Games in 2024.

Trustee Jim attended the post-Games event recently where the numbers were discussed and he was presented with some framed medals from the 2024 Games in recognition of the work and support given to the Games by the Donor Family Network.





Are you interested in attending the **World Transplant Games** in 2025?

From 17th to 24th August the GB and NI team will be competing in the World Transplant Games in Dresden, Germany. Donor Family Network members are welcome to go along.

There will be a Gift of Life Remembrance evening in the stunning Frauenkirche which was heavily damaged during the last war but has been lovingly restored to its former glory. Sports will take place around the area but there will be plenty of time for sightseeing. Unlike the British Games, some events are open to donor families. More information can be found at [wtg2025.com](http://wtg2025.com).

Karen Piotr is the Team Manager for donor families and living donors. If you are interested in more information please contact the charity and we will pass on your details to her.

## LDOC concert for DFN

On Saturday 16th November the London Doctors Orchestra and Choir are performing Mass, Mystery and Blues.

Immerse yourself in a concert that combines the tragedy and slightly surreal tale of Dvorak's "The Wild Dove", the sparkling splendour of Weber's 1st clarinet concerto, Haydn's joyous "St Nicholas Mass", alongside elements featuring a modern twists such as Duruflé's Impressionist take on plainsong chant and "Blue Moon".

Tickets are available from Eventbrite for £16.

All proceeds are for the Donor Family Network so please offer your support.



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## AN ENGLISH COUNTRY GARDEN

### Answers to the names of common types of flowers from cryptic clues.....

1	Fail to recall a name I call myself	Forget me not
2	China drinking vessel for dairy fat	Buttercup
3	Famous Pratt as well as the Mother	Chrysanthemum
4	Sugary Bill	Sweet William
5	Sounds like diamonds are for the Scottish plant	Heather
6	Rearrange mega ruin	Geranium
7	Sad ringer	Blue Bell
8	Bread fed bee's produce	Honeysuckle
9	Got up	Rose
10	Children's card game, mythical beast	Snap Dragon
11	Mrs Bucket raises 80's keyboard	Hyacinth
12	Sounds like noisy frogs	Crocus
13	Alternatively, baby goat	Orchid
14	Coloured optic diaphragm	Iris
15	Camouflage Texas Lawman	Hydrangea
16	Gauntlet for Basil Brush	Foxglove
17	Solar Bloom	Sunflower
18	Love it transforming	Violet
19	Wintry precipitation to fall	Snowdrop
20	Romance amongst the haze	Love in a mist
21	Plenty of work for Elizabeth	Busy Lizzie
22	Name of the ship that accompanied the May-flower	Speedwell

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## NAME THE CHRISTMAS CAROLS AND POPULAR SONGS

FOR EXAMPLE BC = BLUE CHRISTMAS

1	SCICTT	
2	ISMKSC	
3	JB	
4	IDOAWC	
5	RTRNR	
6	CROAOF	
7	DYHWIH	
8	AIAM	
9	FTS	
10	OCAYF	
11	ICUAMC	
12	OLTOB	
13	JTTW	
14	SN	
15	LIS	
16	WCIT	
17	TTDOC	
18	GRYMG	
19	HTHAS	
20	WWYAMC	
21	FONY	
22	HYAMLC	
23	GKW	
24	AIWFCIS	
25	THATI	

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## HEARTSTRINGS

There are so many things I have discovered since I had to go.

And I want to share this one with you—I want to let you into a secret.

You see, I know you feel a sudden pull of emotions sometimes. Those moments when you lose composure and losing me hits you afresh all over again. And it might be at seemingly trivial, inconsequential times like when you're brushing your teeth or getting into the car for work. Or at 2.30pm on any given Wednesday.

And you won't really know why but you will suddenly remember me. Not that you'll have forgotten me, but that I am -in that moment- all you can think about.

Overwhelming so !!

Well, here's the secret;

That's because of our heartstrings.

We are connected to everyone we love by invisible, unbreakable threads. And when one of us misses the other person, we only need to pull on those heartstrings to bring them a little closer to us.

Sometimes it hurts. Sometimes we grab desperately at the thread like a life buoy in a storm and our string is pulled so abruptly that it burns.

But it never breaks.

And I just wanted you to know this. So that you can be comforted by knowing that, in the moments when you suddenly miss me most.

**It's because I am missing you too.**



**If you change your address, name or telephone number, please let us know by telephone or e-mail in order that we can keep our database up to date.**