AUTUMN 2025

DONOR FAMILY NETWORK

CONNEXIONS

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In this edition, we honour the incredible generosity of donor families and share stories that celebrate the gift of life. Whether you're newly connected to our community or have been walking this journey for years, we hope these updates offer comfort, connection, and inspiration. Together, we continue to build a network rooted in compassion, remembrance, and hope.

This summer, Oxford proudly hosted the Westfield Health British Transplant Games, celebrating the power of organ donation and the resilience of transplant recipients. The event opened with a parade of teams in the majestic grounds of Blenheim Palace, setting a tone of grandeur and gratitude for the four-day celebration of life and sport.

The event welcomed transplant recipients, live donors, donor families, and supporters from across the UK; each with powerful stories of hope and healing, courage and generosity.

Twenty-six sports were contested, ranging from squash and swimming to darts and pétanque across 12 venues in Oxford, with Blenheim Palace hosting daily activities.

The Games are made possible thanks to the vision, leadership, and dedication of individuals and organisations who are passionate about championing the gift of life through organ donation.

The
Gift of Life
Memorial

THANK YOU

We thank everyone who has kindly raised funds or made a donation to the Donor Family Network recently:

Thank you to our regular donors

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

Donations have been gratefully received from

Kirkcaldy Probus Club
James Burrough
Bird & Co Solicitors
A McParland
Paul Dixon
Colin Ward
Owston Ferry Women’s Institute
Tracey Lyon in memory of her daughter Erin
Kirsty Gudgin in memory of her husband Robert
Ann Irving in memory of Richard
Judy Durber in memory of her brother David Peake
E Stephens in memory of her husband Norman
Kevin Greagsby in memory of his son Daniel
Colin & Kath Blanchard in memory of their son Richard
Donation in memory of Mark Ingram, whose friends from ‘Woodys’ held a fund-raising golf day, known as the ‘sausage cup’
Donations in memory of Joseph Roberts

IN MEMORY

Donations in memory of:

Eoin Douglas

Ann Baxter

Marion Rishworth

Donor Family Network member **Liz Phillips** has kindly been raising funds for us in memory of her husband Rick, who donated 25 years ago, at the age of 38. With her daughter Jade, Liz joins the Donor Family Network at the Transplant Games annually and runs in the donor run in Rick's memory. She says, 'twenty five years is a long time to keep a memory alive but it's also a reminder to love the people who love you'.

We are very grateful to the family and friends of **Jean Amesbury** for raising funds in her memory for the Donor Family Network. They say, 'she was a tiny lady with a huge zest for life. Her ready smile, compassionate heart and practical support will be greatly missed by all who knew her'. Jack and Jean have been regular supporters of the charity for a number of years.

ANNUAL REMEMBRANCE AND THANKSGIVING EVENT

Almost 200 people joined us at the National Memorial Arboretum in September for our annual remembrance and thanksgiving event, including donor families, recipients and others who support the work we do.

This event offers the chance for people to remember those who have given the gift of life through organ and tissue donations, as well as those who have benefitted from a transplant.

We had some excellent speakers, including Suzanne Goodfellow, who spoke eloquently about her journey through organ donation, sharing memories and photographs of her little daughter Anna.

James Lawton, who received a liver in 2022 then told us about his experience as a recipient, including his success at the British and World Transplant Games. He shared a poem called ‘my scar’, which he wrote following his transplant.

We listened to poems, lit candles in memory of donors and were treated to a few songs from the amazing Collaboration Choir.

GOODBYE AND WELCOME

Retirement of two trustees

Thank you to Audrey Wheeler and Gill Ferguson for your contribution to the Donor Family Network as Trustees.

On behalf of the Donor Family Network and all those whose lives have been touched by your compassion and dedication, we extend our deepest gratitude for your years of service. Your unwavering commitment to donor families, and your tireless advocacy have left an indelible mark on our community. As you step down from your trustee role, please know that your legacy will continue to inspire and uplift. Thank you for everything you've done to honour donors and support their families—you have truly made a difference.

Welcome to two new trustees

Hi! We are David & Nicola Lee and we are delighted to be asked to become Trustees of the Donor Family Network. We live in Kettering, Northamptonshire and became a donor family when our youngest daughter, Miriam, died of a sudden, unexplained cardiac arrest at the age of 17 in 2016. Since Miriam's death we have been honoured to receive letters from 3 of her 4 organ recipients and have been privileged to meet one of them and to cheer him on at the Transplant Games. It was at the games in Leeds in 2022, that we became more aware and interested in the work and activities of the DFN and were encouraged to attend the next games with them. Since then, our involvement has grown, attending both the Transplant Games and the Precious Gift events at the Arboretum.

After Miriam's death we wanted to do something positive in her memory, so became involved as fundraisers for the charity Cardiac Risk in the Young, who supported us soon after her death. Our efforts so far have enabled CRY to hold a heart screening day for 120 young people locally, with another 2 taking place next year.

Miriam had spoken to us about her desire to become an organ donor, and this has driven us to encourage others to talk about their wishes. Having answered a call for people to join the Organ Donation Committee at our local hospital, Nicola is now Chair of the committee. Having worked as a primary school teacher for many years, she draws on her skills to do talks and create displays promoting organ donation in the local community.

David is the technical one of us, he was in corporate IT for many years and is keen to use his knowledge and skills as part of the DFN. He enjoys making music, particularly singing and recently joined a local recorder consort. He is the willing foot soldier to Nicola's fundraising and awareness raising activities – after 38 years of marriage he knows that willingness and a smile makes life easier in the long run!!

We are blessed to have two other children, Matthew and Eleanor, 3 grandsons and 1 granddaughter.

IN MEMORY OF DARREN JOHNSON

Darren's Mum, Rosalyn says "I was reminded to write Darren's story after our family collected The Order of St John Award for Organ Donation held at Pathfinder House, Huntingdon and presented by Brigadier Tim Seal Vice Lord Lieutenant.

Darren was born on 21st April 1979. Six weeks premature and weighing 4 and half pounds - he couldn't wait to be here!

The treasured, first born grandchild, for both sides of our family. He was a sweet, handsome, good natured son, who welcomed his sister Michelle 3 years later with complete joy.

Together they shared a happy, fun childhood - spending a lot of time with all our extended family.

Both thoroughly spoilt; as their cousins didn't arrive for another 4 years. They then became very good play mates for their cousins; as we regularly spent weekends with my sisters' and brother's families.

At the local village school in Great Shelford Darren was a quiet, studious pupil. He had many friends due to his generous, kind nature.

He always loved playing with his toy cars, playing Scalextric and on his Sega Mega drive.

He became a fan of Liverpool Football Club and played football for Duxford Dynamos. As he got older, he started supporting Cambridge United, with his favourite player being Dion Dublin.

He moved on to Sawston Village College and in Year 8, on that fateful night in July 1992 he stumbled into our bedroom with a serious headache.

Darren collapsed and his pupils were dilated. We dialled 999 and our neighbour Dr Bateman came quicker than the ambulance. Dr Bateman began ventilating him, which allowed Darren to get to hospital and be put on life support.

In Addenbrookes Hospital, Cambridge in the Intensive Care Unit, the doctors and nurses could not have been kinder to us.

On the first day we were praying that Darren would recover. We could not really comprehend how our dear son had suddenly gone into a coma. On the second day I asked Gareth what he thought about organ donation.

I had recently read about how Hospitals desperately needed organs but found it difficult to approach shocked and grieving parents.

We returned later to the hospital and asked to speak to his nurse. We told her, if there was nothing they could do to help Darren recover, we wished to donate his

DARREN'S STORY

The doctors told us Darren had suffered a brain haemorrhage. So, we agreed to allow the Gift of Life.

The Anaesthetist, the last person we handed our son over to, could not have been more compassionate. He treated Darren with immense gentleness and explained what was going to happen next. Before he took Darren down to theatre to begin the operations, he knelt in front of us and said what wonderful loving parents we were, and he hoped when he had children - he could be as good a parent as we were.

I have never forgotten that speech; given at the lowest point of our lives.

Darren went on to save 8 people's lives. His heart and lungs went to one adult and that patient's heart to another adult.

He gave both his kidneys, his liver, and an inch of skin to save a burns victim. He also saved the sight of 2 people.

Later, from our local Obituaries newspaper I set up an online Memorial for Darren.

Mr Peter Mackman began writing on the site on Darren's birthday and at Christmas. We did not know this gentleman, and after a few years I wrote and asked him why? He responded by email, that he knew he had received one of Darren's kidneys. He received his new kidney in Addenbrookes Hospital, and his doctor told him his kidney had come from a teenage boy. As we were in the local newspaper he saw Darren on the front page, and knew it was from him.

Just a few years ago we met Peter and his wife. This was an emotional meeting. He was so grateful for the chance of the healthier life Darren had given him. It was wonderful to know that he had been there to see his children grow up; and then move on to become a Grandad.

He could not have done any of this, without Darren's Gift of Life. Sadly, Mr Mackman died last year; but had lived on from his transplant for 32 years.

It has now been 33 years since Darren died. We joined The Donor Family Network soon after it began. We have always found the Donor Family Network a great comfort to us. The yearly cards and gifts are always gratefully received.

Finally, I now sing with The Collaboration Choir and Darren has been illustrated over this year's Charity 'There You'll Be', so he will live on forever".

BURSARY INFORMATION

When David Nix (who founded the Donor Family Network with his late wife, Jane) retired as Chairman, the Trustees created the 'David Nix Bursary'. This grants money to recipients who have been selected to represent GB & NI at the biannual World Transplant Games. This year they were held in Dresden, Germany, and six competitors received support. All the competitors have to arrange their own funding to attend, compete, purchase team kit and stay at the venue. Every time the games are held applications are invited and David then decides on who will benefit and by how much. The following are some of the reports the DFN has received from those lucky enough to be beneficiaries this year.

Imogen Raxter's story

To all of the Trustees, supporters and donors of the Donor Family Network I wanted to write to say thank you so much for the support to help me go to the World Transplant Games.

My name is Imogen Raxter and I received a liver transplant at Birmingham Children's Hospital when I was four months old. I have taken part in the British Transplant Games since I was three years old and this year I was super excited to be selected to compete at the World Transplant Games as a member of Team GB in Dresden, Germany.

I was very nervous about going to the World Games as I didn't know what to expect but it was also exciting to be competing with transplant athletes from around the world and supporting each other at the Games and making new friends in the transplant world. Having arrived after two days of driving and visiting cities in Belgium and Germany I was able to join the opening ceremony and carry the flag with other junior athletes for Team GB on the athletes parade around the city and into the stadium. It took a long time to parade as there were so many countries competing and all joining the parade. This was my first sight of the stadium which was a great sports stadium, but a little scary to think I would be competing in front of the large stand. There were a lot of speeches at the opening ceremony, luckily some in English but some of them were in other languages so I didn't understand them!

The following day I only had a training day, so after some practice and spending some time exploring our way around Dresden and some sight-seeing, the evening was the Games Cultural Party with all teams attending and having a fun night on a city beach which was great. We traded lots of pin badges with other countries there, talking with people from many different countries. My favourite pin was the Australian one, as it was gold and had a cute koala on a reed.

After that we drove to our accommodation for the night which was a little lodge next to a lake 20kms north of Dresden city as this was to be the location for the cycling races.

A RECIPIENT STORY

The next day I was able to join some of the other cycling team members to ride the roads of the race route which was really good fun but it was very hot so my friend and I swam, we were glad to jump in the lake to cool off.

The next morning we competed in our first event which was cycling 5k, road race. I was very excited to compete as I had seen the course and it looked very pretty through the country side on closed roads and around a lake which was lovely. My friend and I both came second in cycling races, then to cool off after our race we jumped in the lake again. We then went to our hotel in Dresden and went out for dinner with another games family to celebrate my mum's birthday.

I played a badminton match the next day and won gold which I was very pleased about. My last day of competition was track and field where I competed in ball throw, long jump and 100 metre sprint. I really enjoyed the competition which was tough with four of us crossing the line together in the 100m and it was so great to celebrate with athletes from different nations even if sign language was often the means of communication!

On the last day of competition I had no events so was able to support the rest of our team and also join together with athletes and supporters to create the circle of life around the whole track which was very symbolic.

The last night was the closing ceremony and the Gala Dinner which was really good fun, a chance to celebrate the week of the Games and the overall experience together as I danced with all of my friends, new and old, from both BCH and other hospitals across the UK, until 1am.

Overall looking back although I was super nervous before the Games I enjoyed this experience so much, made new friends and I am very glad I got to go and be part of such a celebration of life.

Finally, thank you so much to the Donor Family Network, to David Nix and the Trustees for your brilliant contribution which helped me get to Dresden and have such a fantastic experience.

With thanks and best wishes and continued support.

Imogen Raxter xxx

ANDY CLARKE'S STORY

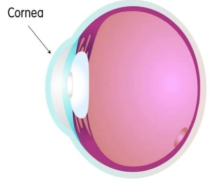
I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks for the bursary that allowed me to attend the World Transplant Games in Dresden, Germany last week. As a liver transplant recipient of five years, this experience was profoundly meaningful to me. It was an incredible opportunity not only to compete, but to connect with a global community of transplant recipients, living donors and donor families. Meeting so many kind and inspiring individuals, including those who have selflessly given the gift of life, reminded me of the importance of organ donation and the power of second chances.

While I competed in swimming and didn't achieve the results I hoped for, simply being there was a victory in itself. The sense of camaraderie, support and shared experience among participants made the games unforgettable. This bursary gave me the chance to celebrate life, health and resilience on an international stage. Thank you for making this journey possible and for helping transplant recipients like me continue to thrive and honour the incredible gift we've been given.

Andy Clarke

What do you know about corneal donation?

- As a corneal donor you could help restore the sight of someone affected by eye disease or injury.
- People with cancer can almost always donate their corneas.
- Poor eyesight does not prevent someone being a corneal donor.
- Corneal donation can take place in a hospital, funeral home or Hospice.
- Donated corneas can help people see again, they let light into the eye.



Donated corneas can help people see again, they let light into the eye.

HSJ AWARDS 2025

The Donor Family Care Service (DFCS) have been shortlisted for the Health Service Journal (HSJ) 'NHS Communications initiative of the Year' award. For 45 years, the HSJ Awards have been the most prestigious recognition of healthcare excellence in the UK. More than an awards programme, they provide a platform to showcase the most significant projects, best practice initiatives, and transformative innovations shaping the future of NHS care. The awards recognise the individuals and organisations proving what the NHS at its best can be.

The awards provide a platform for the DFCS to showcase the real impact of their communications initiatives and improvements in inclusive and expert care. They will also grant a stamp of approval, raising the profile of DFCS projects and an opportunity to set a standard for excellence within donor family care following organ donation.

The submission focused specifically on two initiatives – the bespoke donor family website and access to bereavement support for families who have supported organ and tissue donation. It also highlights the key work and support the team provide families, without which these initiatives are of no value.

To find out more about the HSJ, please go to the DFCS website.

Congratulations to Trustee Andrea Fallow on being chosen as a model for Matalan Christmas pyjamas, in conjunction with Alder Hey Children's Hospital.

Andrea is a Senior Neonatal Nurse and is holding Lillie, a former patient at the hospital.

DRESDEN WORLD TRANSPLANT GAMES

As well as the bursary winners, two of our Donor Families were also in Dresden for the World Transplant Games. Karen Piotr was the Team GB Live Donor and Donor Family captain and Lisa Wilson was a games volunteer. Both have described the games as emotional and amazing in equal measures. From seeing all the athletes compete, to attending the donor family picnic, to the overwhelming opening ceremony, where donor families and live donors come in at the end. We hope this will encourage more donor families to attend the next World Games which are in Leuven (Belgium) on 25th July to 1st August 2027

Lisa was also extremely proud, in her volunteering role, to be selected to carry the Team GB Nations Board at the opening ceremony. She then managed after guiding the 266 Team GB athletes to their seats, to sprint to the back of the procession changing from her blue volunteers t-shirt to the official red donor t-shirt, and dance with the WTG mascot bear!

"Leading Team GB through the streets of Dresden and into the Stadium was an experience I will never forget", says Lisa. "There was plenty of cheering and clapping by onlookers in the packed streets and then a standing ovation as the Donor Families/Live Donors entered the stadium last, according to tradition.

Volunteering is a great way of feeling involved and useful in these events and I thoroughly recommend other Donor Families going down this route. Plus, as was the case at the WTG, seeing over a thousand competitors participating in the huge sporting event, gives great comfort to know Tom and many others, have given the second chance of life, with the most precious gift of all, the gift of life".

JACK'S FIRST TIME AT THE WORLD TRANSPLANT GAMES

My name is Jack, I had a bone marrow transplant in 2022 as treatment for aplastic anaemia. After the transplant I was asked by the head consultant, Becky James, if I wanted to join the games. I immediately said yes due to my love for sport since a young age. At the time I had no idea just how much the games would change my view on both transplants and parts of life.

My first games was in 2023 for the British Transplant Games, where I met lots of amazing people with interesting stories of their own transplants. Before the games I felt estranged from people like me, who had a transplant, however talking to some of the athletes and their families really opened up my eyes, that there are people who have gone through similar situations to myself.

I also went to the British Games in 2024 and 2025 however, in 2024 Lisa, who manages the junior team for the World Games invited me and a few others to join her at the World Games in Dresden for 2025. To me the World Games were the most special games that I have been to so far, due to the amazing camaraderie between all of the athletes. It was competitive yet heartwarming to watch so many people who have all gone through so much, and to me that was eye opening. For two years post transplant I had never fully committed to my sport, squash, always failing to recover to my full stamina, however, before the World Games I tried my hardest to recover and got somewhat close. The top athletes at the games didn't open my eyes because they were amazing at their sport but because they were amazing at their sport and managed to recover from such a difficult time in their life.

All in all the World Games have sparked a passion for a sport that I once believed I'd never play to my fullest ability again. I am extremely excited to play at the next World Games, hopefully fitter and more passionate so I can inspire people who might be in the same shoes as I once was.

LOUISE PRASHAD'S

Nine years ago, my world broke apart in a single night. I was 37 weeks pregnant with twins at only 21 years of age, full of hope for the life ahead. For the past three weeks I had been experiencing worsening symptoms: excessive thirst, jaundice, reduced movements, nose bleeds and extreme fatigue. Time and time again my local hospital ignored my pleas. I was a young mum nearly at term with twins and I was not heard. Then hours later after my latest hospital visit I collapsed and was rushed into hospital, my body failing. When I arrived, the news was unbearable: Mia and Leo, my babies no longer had a heartbeat. At the same time, my liver had shut down completely and I was induced into a coma leaving my husband Max spiralling. Doctors told my family that without a transplant, I had hours — not days — left to live.

Those are words no family should ever have to hear. In the midst of that chaos, I drifted in and out of awareness, knowing only that I was being held by machines, by doctors, and by the love of those around me. And then, unseen to me, in another family's darkest hour, a decision was made. They chose to say yes to donation. That decision meant a liver became available. It meant I was given a chance. It meant I am here, writing these words now.

Waking up from transplant surgery weeks later was confusing. My body felt broken, my heart shattered. I was grieving for my babies while trying to understand how it was possible that I had survived. Survival felt both a miracle and a heavy responsibility. I had suffered brain damage so had no recollection of my pregnancy.

As I began to heal and understand I promised myself and my donor family that their gift would not be wasted. I didn't yet know how, but I would find a way to honour them.

Recovery was slow. Learning to walk again, to regain strength, to trust that my body could hold me — all of it took time. But every day I looked at my scar and reminded myself: this is proof of love. Proof that even in loss, something extraordinary can be given.

From those small steps, life began to rebuild. I discovered walking then began running, first as a way to process grief, then as a way to celebrate life. Running gave me air, space, and purpose. Over time it led me into races, marathons, even ultra-marathons. Each finish line was a private thank you to my donor and babies.

Alongside running, other doors began to open. I graduated with an LLB in law, something I once thought illness had stolen from me. I married the love of my life, Max who has been my constant. Then the miracle I thought was impossible happened: I became a mother again. Today, I am mum to two wonderful children, Ava, now 7, and Nico, 5. They are the brightest part of my story — the living proof of what donation makes possible.

In the nine years since my transplant, I've tried to make good on that early promise. I've delivered over 600 talks on organ donation — in schools, hospitals, workplaces, and community halls. I've raised over £350,000 to support transplant causes and donor family charities.

Sport became another way to celebrate my donor. Competing at the British Transplant Games, I've won 12 gold medals. At the World Transplant Games, I've had the honour of representing Team GB and bringing home silver medals in shot put, discus, and long jump. Those medals aren't really mine — they belong to my donor and their family. They are proof of the second life I was given.

Along the way, I've been crowned Ms United Kingdom and received awards for fundraising and advocacy, but the real reward has been being able to live a life of purpose. I now serve as a trustee of Transplant Sport, and I'm working toward launching a Community Interest Company to help other transplant patients find strength through athletics, with access to free opportunities so no one is excluded.

I have also found my dream job working at Special Olympics GB helping adults with intellectual disability access sports and British/World Games very similar to the transplant games. It is very rewarding. Nine years after my transplant, I finally met members of my donor's family. That meeting is hard to describe. It was full of tears and hugs, but above all, a sense of connection. To thank them face to face, to look into their eyes and say, "You saved me," was one of the most profound moments of my life. Their loved one lives on in me — in my body, in my children, in every medal, in every talk, in every heartbeat.

Thanks to the David Nix Bursary, I was able to compete at the World Transplant Games — to wear the GB vest, to stand among athletes from around the world, and to showcase what donation can achieve. That support turned hope into reality and gave me the platform to share my story with others.

To every donor family reading this: I know your gift was born from heartbreak. I know it doesn't take away your loss. But I hope you can see in my story, and in countless others, the difference your courage makes. You give futures. You give marriages, graduations, children, medals, talks, communities. You give life itself.

Every time I stepped onto the track, I felt my donor with me. I competed not just for myself, but for them, for their family, and for all donor families who know both unimaginable loss and extraordinary generosity. The Games gave me the chance to be part of a global community that understands resilience, gratitude, and hope in its purest form.

I am deeply grateful to the Donor Family Network for funding my registration and making this journey possible. Your support meant that I could not only compete, but also connect with others who share this unique bond. Thank you for believing in me, volunteering your time and for honouring donors everywhere.

I carry my donor with me always. And I will spend every day I have left trying to make their gift — and your generosity — count.

Louise Prashad

AISHA CHAUDHRY – AUTHOR OF *FAMILY MATTERS*

I'm an author, advocate, and coach, and my work centres around bringing visibility and awareness, and encouraging life-saving conversations, especially around organ donation. The reason I began my journey into advocacy was as a result of my deeply personal loss: my mother, Annsa who passed away while waiting for a kidney transplant for ten years. She had four children, me Aisha, Aneesa, Abbid and Ali, and a loving husband Ajaz who stood by her until her last breath. We were with our Mother right until the last moment, and we were grateful for the time we had which was full of so much laughter and fun, great food and family events. Mum's death wasn't just a loss for the Chaudhry family; it was a turning point in my life. I chose to channel my loss and grief into something that could create change so that fewer families would have to experience what we did. If every person who reads my book tells their family what their wishes were about organ donation, then that's a chance for someone's life to be saved.

My memoir, *Family Matters*, tells the story of our family's journey, one of laughter, love, illness, and heartbreaking loss. Growing up in a vibrant British Asian household, I was surrounded by warmth and cultural richness. But everything changed when I was a teenager aged 15 and my mother was diagnosed with kidney failure at the age of 39. Over the next decade, we lived in the shadow of hospitals, medical uncertainty, and hope that would rise and fall with every potential donor. Despite my mother's strength and our relentless support, she never got the chance to receive a transplant and died just after she turned 50. I am about to turn the same age this year which reminds me of how incredibly lucky I was to have my mother in my life, but also sad because I wish she was still here now.

Losing Mum was devastating, but I didn't want my story to end in silence. I wrote *Family Matters* to process my own grief and to shine a light on something often left unspoken. Organ donation can save lives, but only if people talk about it. Through my writing, public speaking, and advocacy, I've made it my mission to start those conversations.

The title *Family Matters* holds layered meaning. First, because family in whatever shape or form it takes matters above all. Second, because when someone is unwell, it affects the whole family, not just the patient, yet these are often taboo subjects that people avoid discussing. Just like death and taxes, not enough people like to talk about donation if they can't relate to the topic or aren't affected somehow by it. So it's easier to keep the conversations within the family so as not to upset people.

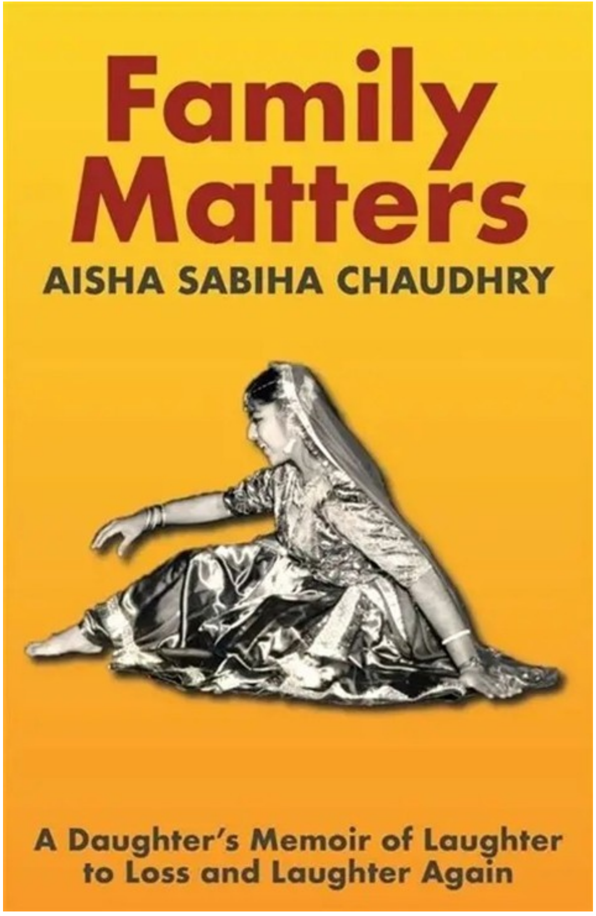
A DAUGHTER'S MEMOIR

My mother never wanted to burden people with what she was experiencing, so she didn't talk about having to wait for a lifesaving transplant outside of the home or hospitals. And most importantly, because when it comes to organ donation, the family holds the final say. Even if you've registered as a donor, your loved ones can override your wishes if they don't know about them. That's why it's so important to talk. When we knew our mother wasn't going to survive, we were also asked if we would agree to mum not receiving blood anymore. That's because she had a rare blood group of b-rhesus negative. It wasn't comfortable being asked this question, but we gave our answer. It also made me think that asking people if they consented to organ donation after losing their loved one is the worst possible moment, and how this could easily be avoided if families addressed the topic at another point in time, and not when they have just lost a loved one.

Since publishing the book, I've used my platform to campaign across the UK, engaging with diverse audiences and encouraging open, honest dialogue about donation.

I've spoken at NHS Blood and Transplant webinars, civil service equality events, on TV, radio, and podcasts. In 2023, I was honoured with an award at the British Parliament during Organ Donation Week for my volunteer work. Every event, every interview, every conversation is part of a larger movement to normalise these discussions and promote informed, compassionate choices.

At the heart of my work is the belief that donation is more than a medical act, it's an act of love and legacy. One decision can change the course of another person's life. By encouraging people to have these conversations with their families, I hope to bridge the gap between intention and action. Too many potential donors are lost simply because their loved ones didn't know their wishes.



This journey, from daughter to author to advocate, has shown me the incredible power of stories to heal, educate, and inspire. *Family Matters* isn't just my memoir, it's a call to action. A plea for change. A reflection of my deepest hope: that by sharing my family's story, I can inspire others to make the life-saving choice to donate, and ensure no one else has to endure the same heartbreak in silence.

Through every campaign, every talk, and every reader touched by my book, I see the ripple effect growing. This work is no longer just mine, it belongs to everyone who's ever waited, hoped, or lost. At the British Transplant Games in Oxford, people thanked me for listening to their story of how awful it was for them, how they felt and how incredibly hard the wait was. It's a movement driven by love, grounded in truth, and fueled by the belief that every person deserves a chance to live fully.

GIFT OF LIFE MEMORIAL

Peter Morton, Chair of the North West Regional Organ Donation Committees, visited the National Memorial Arboretum recently and took this photograph

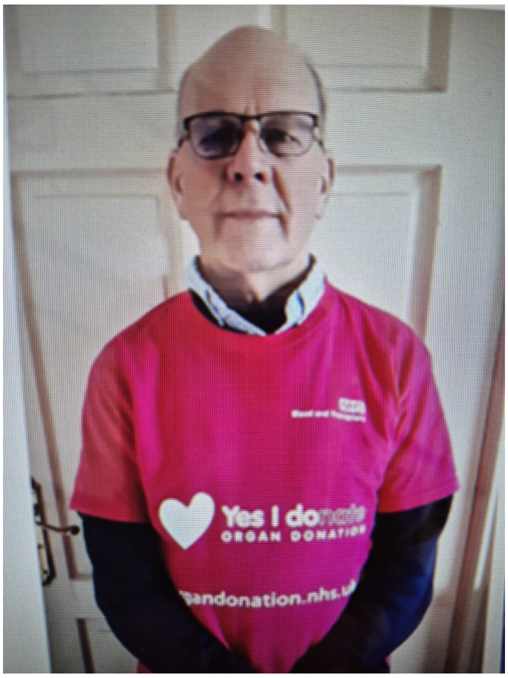
He said "It was covered in falling leaves which in a strange way made it even more poignant as in the song …... "I miss you most of all, when Autumn Leaves start to fall" !

He also said the Arboretum was well worth a visit for this and the other 400 memorials!!!

Keith Astbury

Sandi Sund, from NHS Blood and Transplant Organ Donation Ambassador Programme wrote this tribute to Keith on his retirement.

"Keith Astbury, a member of the Donor Family Network, has decided to retire, and step down as a volunteer as an ambassador and I have taken a moment to reflect on his time with us.



Keith joined the programme in 2019 and attended the training day in Manchester. During his time, Keith volunteered for over 150 hours. I remember many of the events Keith participated in and thank him for all his contributions.

He has been an outstanding ambassador to work with and I have found him to be incredibly accommodating, but most importantly, always willing to share his personal story, regarding his daughter, Pippa's, donation.

I will miss your presence, and am so grateful for your participation, contributions, and openness to share. A simple thank you just doesn't seem to be enough, as I am so very grateful to have worked with you

Enjoy your retirement Keith, you have earned it."

WORDS CONTAINING THE WORD HEART QUIZ

1	Area in front of the fire	**6**
2	Has exceptional bravery or courage	**11**
3	Pulsation of a major organ	**9**
4	Romantic partners	**11**
5	Grief or anguish	**10**
6	Having concern., empathy for others	**11**
7	Substantial, filling	**6**
8	Cruel or callous	**9**
9	Emotionally generous, receptive	**11**
10	Lacking courage, timid	**12**
11	Sympathetic, emotionally responsive	**11**
12	With gusto and zest	**8**
13	Complete commitment	**14**
14	Dejected or discouraged	**11**
15	A symbol of love and affection	**11**
16	A physically attractive person	**9**
17	A lack of feeling, indifferent	**11**
18	Deeply sincere, genuine	**9**
19	Lacking spirit or enthusiasm	**11**
20	Pulls and stirs tender emotions	**12**

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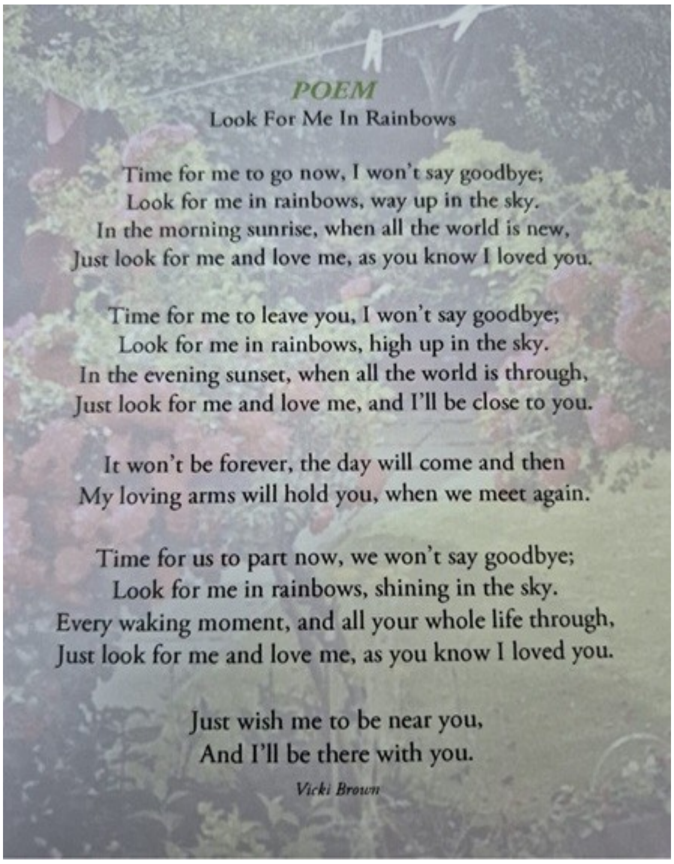
The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) came into force in the UK in May 2018. The act regulates how personal information is stored and used by organisations and businesses, including the DFN. It is now some years since the data base of members was created so the Trustees have decided that we need to confirm that members and friends of the network still wish to receive mail and email from us. Over the last few months we have asked for confirmation that you wish to remain a member and many have contacted us to do that.

We appreciate that this is probably one of those 'I will reply shortly' tasks that are then forgotten so many have not replied. However, we need your confirmation and, after this mailing, we will be using a new database which will only include members who have confirmed in writing (email or letter) their wish to continue. The old database will be deleted. If you have already replied and received confirmation from Nigel please rest assured that you are on the new one. If you haven't replied but wish to continue as a member or friend, please reply by the end of January 2026. We would hate to lose anybody who continues to value their membership.



POEM
Look For Me In Rainbows

Time for me to go now, I won't say goodbye;
Look for me in rainbows, way up in the sky.
In the morning sunrise, when all the world is new,
Just look for me and love me, as you know I loved you.

Time for me to leave you, I won't say goodbye;
Look for me in rainbows, high up in the sky.
In the evening sunset, when all the world is through,
Just look for me and love me, and I'll be close to you.

It won't be forever, the day will come and then
My loving arms will hold you, when we meet again.

Time for us to part now, we won't say goodbye;
Look for me in rainbows, shining in the sky.
Every waking moment, and all your whole life through,
Just look for me and love me, as you know I loved you.

Just wish me to be near you,
And I'll be there with you.

Vicki Brown