



Donor Family Network

Connexions

Patrons: Heather Mills, Loraine Morgan-Brinkhurst Registered Charity: 1098781



Christmas Message



The tenth anniversary year of the Donor Family Network has been a very busy one and has seen the Network growing in prominence for its work supporting donor families and promoting organ and tissue donation. It is very difficult to sum this year up in brief as so much has happened—the Gathering, the service, the launch of our bereavement booklets and bereavement library, taking part in the Transplant Torch relay and the opening ceremony for the Transplant Games.

But most notably this year we have started work on our biggest project—to create a National Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire. We hope that this will be a wonderful and constant reminder of the wonderful gift donors offer and recipients receive. On that note I would like to remind every family reading this message that however busy the trustees are with these activities we are always available if you need us including over the Christmas period.

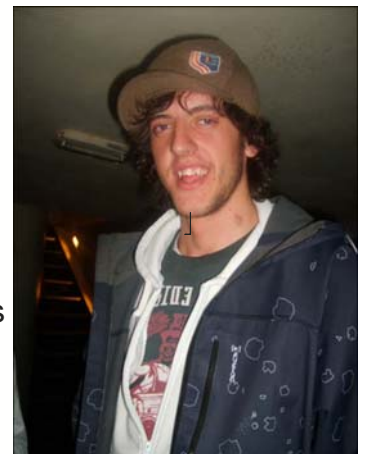
On behalf of myself, Jane and all the trustees may I wish you all a peaceful Christmas and New Year.
David Nix, Chairman

In Memory of Robert Forbes

This edition of the newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Robert Forbes through the fundraising efforts of his father Alex. Alex has walked Hadrian's Wall and the school where he works held a special rock concert to raise money for the Network.

Robert would have been 21 on 8th December and this is one of the ways in which his family have chosen to remember him. We send them our thoughts and prayers at this difficult time.

We would like to remind all of our readers that help and support is always available should you require it, especially at difficult times such as birthdays and Christmas. Contact us by phone, letter or email, details on the back page.



Robert Forbes

Robert Forbes would have been 21 this December. His life was cut tragically short by a car crash in April this year. He gave the gift of life. This is his story.

Robert was the youngest of four children, son of Julie and Alex and with three older sisters, Vicky, Jennifer and Marie, he also had four nephews, Alex, Graham, Jake and Charlie who he loved to spend time and play games with. He was a normal lad with a great sense of humour. He had a great community spirit - at the age of five he adopted a local lady, Nanny Blackham, as his own Nan and during his teens visited or rang her every day, doing odd jobs or just keeping her company cooking her meals and looking after her till the day she passed away.

Robert wasn't an academic - in fact his best GCSE was in cookery, which he loved, especially barbeques if he could persuade his Dad to let him (he was only seven when he tried to take over this role from Alex). He loved farms and animals - getting up early (5.30 when the milking machines were turned on) whilst on holiday with his sisters to help with milking and feed the lambs and calves; he even loved mucking out and on one occasion had to be hosed down after falling in the muck. He loved to travel, to camp, to surf and to ski. He loved his fiancée Becky and they were buying their first home together.

A hard working lad, on the day of his accident 23rd April, he finished work, had his tea with his parents and then spent the evening with Becky. On his way home in heavy rain, he took a different route to his usual one. He crashed at the bottom of a hill hitting a tree; he had no injuries except where the roof hit his head resulting in multiple bleeds. Staff at Stoke University Hospital fought hard to save Robert but he died on April 29th. Robert was not one for paperwork so didn't carry a donor card. But his parents knew what he wanted. Four years earlier one of Robert's very close friends Vicky died in very similar circumstances and carried a donor card. Her accident was a couple of miles from where the family was on holiday on a farm in Kent. Unfortunately she wasn't found until it was too late for donation to take place. Robert told his parents 'if ever this should happen to me you must make sure nothing is wasted'. So there was no decision to be made when the issue of organ donation was raised. It was just a question of doing what Robert wanted. There have been four main recipients of Robert's organs and recently his family has learned of a very young boy who has received one of his heart valves.



Robert's family is very proud that he has achieved so much and that his wishes have been fulfilled. There is now a memorial tree planted on the farm (that the family have spent many happy years holidaying), also a large tree trunk as a seat provided by the farmer and the corner of the field will be forever a quiet area for family and friends. There are many of the campers who attended the planting of the ashes, who will sit and reflect on a young man who always had time to stop and chat to all people, from his boyhood to that of a caring young man.



Cardiff Memorial

Memorial Stone in memory of Donors in Wales

On 3rd November 2007 a memorial stone was unveiled in Alexander Gardens Cardiff to remember donors from Wales. The idea was developed by the Donor Transplant Co-ordinators from the Cardiff and Vale NHS Trust and donor families were involved in the design.



The memorial was opened by the Lord Mayor of Cardiff and unveiled by Gaynor Taylor whose son Richard 23 died in an in-line skating accident. The 5ft memorial stone was donated by the Kidney Wales Foundation and is set in a corner of the gardens with red roses planted around it as a symbol of remembrance.

It is a place where donor families and recipients can visit to say thank you and is the first memorial for donors in the UK.

Donor Family Quilt

The second panel of the adult quilt is nearing completion but we still have room for more squares. If you haven't made yours yet the template is available on the website or by post—you can see from the squares pictured that they are all unique and use a variety of styles—cross stitch, embroidery, patchwork, appliqué even photos copied onto material. It is whatever is personal to you and reminds you of and represents your loved one. Both quilts are amazingly powerful and they always attract interest wherever we take them, to talks, donor bus trips and the Transplant Games.



Congratulations

Our congratulations to Emily Thackery, co founder of the Live Life Then Give Life campaign and double lung recipient, who recently married Adam. We wish them every happiness. Emily wanted to remember her donor on the big day so added a little touch to her bouquet—one of our pins!



Presents

Stuck for Christmas present ideas—why not check out the sales pages on our website? Proceeds from everything we sell go to help run the Network.

How about sending a packet of forget-me-not seeds with your Christmas cards to family and friends as a reminder of your loved one?

Donor Family Network

PLEASE ! Note our new address and contact details.

Donor Family Network

Phone: 0845 6801954

PO Box 13825

E-mail: info@donorfamilynetwork.co.uk

Birmingham

www.donorfamilynetwork.co.uk

B42 9DJ

Don't forget to tell us you contact details if you move house so that we can keep in touch

Forthcoming Events

30 March 2008

Service of Thanksgiving, Bailgate Methodist Church, Lincoln

10 May 2008

David Nix 60th Birthday Fundraising Event, Tally Ho, Birmingham

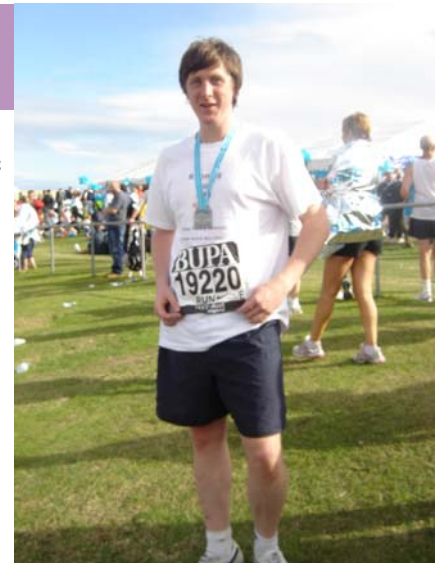
Don't forget to order your tickets now!

6 July 2008

The Precious Gift, Service of Hope & Thanksgiving, St Margaret's Great Barr, Birmingham

Great North Run

Liam Naulls ran the Great North Run in September in aid of the Donor Family Network. Liam is a friend of Martin Burton, the son of two of the DFN's Trustees Nigel and Sue Burton, who became a multi organ donor following a brain haemorrhage in August 2003. On a glorious day Liam completed the race in just two hours and raised over £275 for the Network.



Recycle Your Mobile



Thinking of changing your mobile phone this Christmas? Work somewhere with lots of young people? Then why not arrange a collection of old mobile phones to raise money for the Donor Family Network? Every old mobile which we send for recycling raises money for the network and along with print cartridges helps generate much needed funds. So why not collect them up for us and send them to us at the address above.

Organ Donation

Since 1 April 2007:

- 477 people have donated organs
- an additional 1,125 people have donated corneas
- 1,509 people have received the gift of sight
- 1,433 people have received transplants
- 7,512 people are still waiting for transplants

As at 17 November