

Donor Reflection Essay
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To my donor and her loved ones,

Thank you. Thank you for your sacrifice, your love, kindness and understanding. Losing a loved one is never easy, we never fully wrap our heads around their absence, much less without the ability to see them or hold them for so long. Having lost my father at a young age, my heart goes out to each and every one of you for your gift.

It is hard to fully understand the true depth of gratitude and honor that myself and my classmates feel for your loved one. Through their lives we have learned more in a few short weeks than we had through our entire lives. Their lives and love is etched on every part of their being. While working and learning in the lab with our donor, we contemplated many times what her life must have been like. What she cared for, what work her hands and heart performed, if she was funny, sweet, sharp of wit, a mother, a sister, a leader. Her face showed many years of wisdom and smiles. In her, we gained a deeper appreciation of the human experience than simply identifying structures and tissue. While of course, this is incredibly important to our futures as health care providers, if we do not see the whole person, what good are we?

Our donor truly became our first teacher, our first client, our first look into the unbelievable complexities of the human body. We were in awe every day of just how incredible everyone truly is. It is this sense of awe and reverence that I hope we are all able to carry forwards into our careers as providers. I myself, am in the doctorate of physical therapy program, a career focussed on muscles, joints, bones and nerves. On the movement of the body and improving the lives of anyone whom we come into contact with. Through working with our donor, I have learned more application than our professors could ever teach me. Our specialty is highly focused on connecting one on one with our patients, of growing a relationship with them to understand their desires and goals in life and tailor our treatment to each individual person. I truly do not believe that I could effectively do this were it not for our donor allowing us the deep privilege to work with her everyday. Had we not been given the opportunity to spend so much time with her, to contemplate her life and goals and what made her so special to those who cared for her, I do not believe we would have gained the reverence for individuals that we have now.

I hope to carry her honor and legacy with me. I will never forget her and her kindness to allow us to learn from her. She will be honored in every patient that I care for, in every knee replacement I aid in rehabilitation, in every child whom I help to get back on the playground, in every elder adult whom I help return to tending his garden. While working with her, I could not help but to think of my late father and two things he always said to us, his athletes, and his high school science students: always “work hard, have fun, and get better” and that “life is about the stories.” Our donor has gifted us all with the ability to grow both. Thank you, the family and friends of my donor, and always, thank you to our donor whose kindness and sacrifice deserves all honors. Thank you.