

Serenity

A newsletter for our donor families

QUARTER 2 • 2024



New Private Evening Events for Donor Family Days!

Midwest Transplant Network (MTN) extends an invitation to donor families to our new private events at the Kansas City Zoo & Aquarium and Tanganyika Wildlife Park in Wichita. The events are a fun and unique way to encourage community connections among donor families while providing exclusive access to the parks. As registered guests, you can experience special meet-and-greets with animals, face painting, and more. Additionally, attendees can purchase our newly designed Give Hope Share Life T-shirts for \$5, with both cash and card payments accepted.

Please note MTN will not provide dinner during these events. However, concession stands will be open to purchase refreshments. You are encouraged to bring a refillable water bottle to stay cool and hydrated.

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MIDWEST
TRANSPLANT
NETWORK

New Private Evening Event for Donor Family Days!

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Donor Family Day

at the Kansas City Zoo & Aquarium

Saturday, July 20 • 6 – 9 p.m.

Kansas City Zoo & Aquarium

6800 Zoo Drive, Kansas City, MO 64132

Please note that the Africa section of the zoo will not be open during this private event. A detailed park map with additional information will be provided at check-in. Admission to the aquarium is included with your registration, and you do not need to reserve a time slot.

For more information about the Kansas City Zoo & Aquarium, visit kansascityzoo.org.



Donor Family Day


at Tanganyika Wildlife Park

Saturday, July 27 • Time: 5 – 8 p.m.

Tanganyika Wildlife Park

1000 S. Hawkins Lane, Goddard, KS 67052

For more information about Tanganyika Wildlife Park, visit twpark.com.

For inquiries about these events, contact MTN at 913-262-1668 or aftercare@mwn.org. Please note that park staff may not be able to address event-related questions. 



Register for Donor Family Days:
mwn.org/events




Donor Family Private Facebook Support Group

At Midwest Transplant Network, we hold dear the opportunity to extend ongoing care to our donor families as they navigate the difficult journey of grief following the loss of a cherished loved one. In December 2012, a group of compassionate MTN employees initiated a private Facebook support group exclusively tailored for donor families, with the aim of providing a comforting space for them to find solace and companionship during this challenging time.

This special community offers a sanctuary where donor families can lean on one another for understanding, nurturing and embracing while we walk down the path of grief. The group now holds 750 members. Yet, amidst its growth, the group remains unchanged — in addition to fostering emotional connections, the group serves as a gentle guide through the grieving process, gently nudging members toward healing and self-care. Reminders for upcoming events and gentle prompts for reflection during holidays serve as reminders that they are not alone on their journey.

Every member is encouraged to share as they feel comfortable. It is heartening to witness the mutual support and empathy exchanged within the group, as members find solace in knowing that they are walking this path together.

Please complete the registration form on our website at mwn.org/donor-family-facebook if you would like to join the group. A member from our team will be in contact within 72 hours to go over the next steps. We look forward to having you join this group! 

Guilt and Grief

Adapted from "What's Your Grief?"

It's evident that guilt is a multifaceted emotion intertwined with grief, and the insights provided offer valuable perspectives on its occurrence and coping mechanisms. Acknowledging that guilt is a normal part of the grieving process is crucial, as is recognizing whether it's rational or irrational.

As much as people are quick to say something wasn't our fault or we shouldn't feel guilty, a reality of life is that we all make mistakes and sometimes those mistakes have significant consequences. It could be as large as a grievous error in judgment or a mistake that led to a death. It could be as small as something hurtful we said, or something meaningful we failed to say.

There are many times grief causes completely irrational thoughts. We dissect every moment of time with our loved one; we think of all the things we could have done better. Our irrational brain will find just about anything to feel guilty about. Despite being irrational, this guilt can be consuming.

Often our guilt thoughts, whether rational or irrational, start to consume us. They can drag us down into one of those bottomless black holes — the kind that are full of isolation and despair. In order to adjust your thinking, you have to know what your guilt thoughts are and notice them when they arise.

If your guilt feelings are irrational, admit it. This doesn't mean dismissing your feelings of guilt. It means acknowledging that, though you feel guilty, you may not actually be guilty. Some common examples are acknowledging you did the best you could with the information you had at the time, you couldn't predict the future, there were many other factors at play other than your behaviors, etc. Being honest with yourself about your guilt is important and accepting that grief is sometimes irrational can be helpful.

Find positive thoughts to balance your guilt thoughts. "Thought stopping" is a technique you can use when you notice a negative thought taking over. Make a conscious effort to stop and replace the thought. Though it may not be quite this simple, there is value in having a positive thought to balance negative guilt thoughts you experience. For example, if you are feeling guilt that you were not there at the moment of your loved one's death, when that thought comes up be prepared with a thought about the many times you were there.



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Forgiving yourself is an important step in this process, but forgiveness does not mean condoning or excusing. Forgiveness can mean accepting that we may have done something we regret but finding a new attitude and perspective toward ourselves in relation to that action. It doesn't mean we forget, but means we find a way to move forward.

Consider what your loved one would tell you. Get yourself in a space to truly focus on thinking about your loved one. Imagine telling them how you are feeling, your regrets and your guilt. If there are things you wish you had said, say them. Then imagine what your loved one would tell you.

Remembering that forgiveness, both of ourselves and others, is a path towards acceptance and growth, and that our loved ones' voices and lessons can guide us through the darkest moments. In honoring our experiences and emotions, may we find solace and strength to carry forward on the path of healing. 🌿

Mission

Saving lives by honoring the gift of donation with dignity and compassion

Vision

Leading organ and tissue donation through excellence, quality and partnerships

Contact Us

For more information or questions, call **913-262-1668** or visit **mwtn.org**

To receive Serenity via email or to unsubscribe, please send your request to **aftercare@mwtn.org**.

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1900 W. 47th Place, Suite 400
Westwood, KS 66205



Ambassador Update

Midwest Transplant Network recognizes the invaluable contributions of its volunteers through the Ambassador program. Ambassadors may choose to share stories of hope and inspiration through various community engagements or give back by supporting MTN in various tasks. With a service area encompassing over 5 million people, the role of Ambassadors is crucial in raising awareness about organ, eye and tissue donation. Their efforts are instrumental in encouraging individuals to join the donor registry and in educating the community about MTN's mission, ultimately contributing to the saving of thousands of lives.

For people who have been personally impacted by donation and wish to give back as volunteers, the Ambassador program offers a meaningful avenue for involvement. Interested individuals are encouraged to reach out to Nichole Asquith, Community Engagement Coordinator, at **nasquith@mwtn.org** for details about how to participate in this vital initiative. 