

Heart Foundation Spring 2005 Appeal

[MAIN LETTER]

<Addressee>
<Position>
<Org Name>
<Addrline1>
<Addrline2>
<Suburb> <State> <Postcode>
<Country>

<Date>

Dear <Salutation>,

My colleagues and I urgently need to raise \$510,000 so that the Heart Foundation can continue to fund groundbreaking research projects, which have the potential to save thousands of lives.

Each year around 240 applications from researchers go through an independent assessment process. We look at those that are deemed the most promising. In an ideal world, we would fund all of them, but sadly we can only fund 1 in 5.

<Variable1>

As chief executive officer of the Heart Foundation <in state>, I feel privileged to be part of the truly amazing work being done by Heart Foundation funded researchers. They are improving the lives of people who suffer from cardiovascular disease.

I would love to be able to present back to the board that we have the funds to consider many more worthy research projects in the coming year.

One research project, which we wanted to support last year concerned post-operative complications, most common in children. Yet we simply did not have the funds available. If researchers could find the cause of these complications, and a way to prevent them, they would have an enormous impact on families.

Gifted surgeons around the country are saving lives every day thanks to major advances in surgical techniques in recent years. But, sometimes, despite the best care in the world and all of our knowledge, things can go wrong after surgery for reasons we don't yet understand. This can have a devastating lifelong effect on children and their families for life.

Families like Astrid's.

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Astrid was diagnosed at birth with a major heart defect, transposition of the great arteries (TGA). At just four and a half weeks of age, she underwent her first major operation, an ‘arterial switch repair’.

The operation went for a gruelling 5 hours, but fortunately surgeons were able to repair the heart defect. But just a few hours later little Astrid suffered a cardiac arrest. Her parents watched in horror as a nurse massaged her tiny heart for 14 minutes before it started beating on its own again.

Her mother, Cris, says that even though it happened five years ago, the memory is still raw.

“They brought us into the room and we waited, holding our breath for what seemed like hours. One of the nurses actually had Astrid’s little heart in her hand and was massaging it. We thought she was going to die.”

Much to her parents’ and brother Troy’s relief, after 10 days of intensive care, Astrid survived. But that was just the beginning of the family’s journey to keep Astrid healthy.

“We spent the weeks after she was born thinking, ‘after the surgery everything will be alright.’ But it wasn’t.

“Doctors give you all the possibilities and percentages of what can go wrong, and something did go drastically wrong. We walked out of the hospital knowing our baby was alive, but not knowing what the future was going to bring. We still don’t know.”

Because of an acquired brain injury from the post-operative complications, she has had to endure never-ending visits to therapists, hospitals and doctors.

The problems with her heart, and the treatments, have left Astrid with even more complications – she has now been diagnosed with epilepsy and cerebral palsy.

Astrid has just turned five and she is a happy, energetic little girl. However it has taken years of occupational and speech therapy to get her walking and talking at the level of a three-year-old.

Yet Astrid is one of the lucky ones. Forty years ago there was little hope for children with her condition because the operation wasn’t available then. This just shows what investing in dedicated research over the long term can do. Yet what is absolutely tragic is that for every promising research project we are able to fund, the Heart Foundation has to turn down four more.

Nearly all of our research is funded by wonderful individuals who share my passion for helping people like Astrid and her family. To raise the \$510,000 we need to fund eight new research projects I am asking people like you, <personalised> for gifts of around \$<ask1>, \$<ask2> or \$<ask3> before our 8th September meeting.

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If you are unable to send a donation before then, but are still able to support us, please call me on <phone number> and I will let our staff know to expect your gift shortly thereafter.

Your gift of \$<ask1> will go towards funding the most promising potential breakthroughs in heart research undertaken by the best and brightest researchers in the field.

Of course, a special gift of \$<ask2> or even \$<ask3> would help us even further to conduct more vital research. Research into areas such as preventing post-operative complications which put baby Astrid's life at risk, and have had a far-reaching effect on her whole wellbeing.

Research supported by the Heart Foundation has already made a significant contribution to the body of knowledge about heart disease.

Congenital heart disease – which Astrid was born with – is one of the biggest killers of infants less than one year old. But advancements in medical care such as better diagnostic tests, new medications and surgical techniques have saved the lives of hundreds of babies.

The death rate from congenital heart disease fell by 27.6% among males and 32.2% among females during the decade from 1991 to 2002. Over the past 20 years, the death rate for congenital heart disease has fallen by nearly a half.

I'm sure you'll agree this is an amazing achievement. <As a generous supporter of the Heart Foundation since < year > / As a generous supporter of the Heart Foundation for more than 15 years, you should be proud that you have contributed to research that has already played a significant role in the fight against cardiovascular disease and has saved the lives of people <in state>.

There is, however, still a lot more to be achieved. Cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of death in Australia and a major cause of disability. Yet research that could save thousands of lives remains unfunded simply due to lack of money.

By continuing your support, you are playing a vital part in saving people's lives, a role that is as important as the researchers themselves.

<Variable 2>

So please, join me in supporting the vital research, which you help make possible, to develop better, more effective and less traumatic treatments for children and people of all ages with life-threatening heart conditions.

I hope that one day we will be able to fund all the worthy research projects presented to us. That one day little children like Astrid will not be born sick; or if they are, that they will not have to suffer any more once their heart condition is treated.

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It would mean so much to Cris and her family to know that we are doing all we can to ensure that, in the years to come, no mother will have to endure the pain of not knowing what the future holds for her child.

Heart Foundation research has saved countless Australian lives, but more can be done. Please help us continue our life-saving research with a gift of \$<ask1>. It could make all the difference to children like Astrid.

Yours sincerely,

<signatory>

PS: While our achievements have been many, our challenges are ongoing. Your gift today of \$<ask1>, \$<ask2> or even an exceptional \$<ask3> will help us support many more brilliant young researchers to take us into the future with enthusiasm and determination. Thank you.

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Variable 1

1. Top donor

Donors value to date > \$XXX

On 8th of September I have an important meeting where we will discuss how much funding we have available for research next year. As one of our most committed supporters, I am writing to you to send a gift of \$<ask1> before that date.

2. Confirmed Bequestor

On 8th of September I have an important meeting where we will discuss how much funding we have available for research next year. Your decision to remember the Heart Foundation in your Will shows me that you care deeply about the work we do. As one of our most committed supporters, I am writing to you to ask you to send a gift of \$<ask1> before that date.

3. Single giver – new recruit

On 8th of September I have an important meeting where we will discuss how much funding we have available for research next year. Your gift of \$<don amt> in <month> shows me that you care about the work the Heart Foundation is doing. It is difficult for us to find caring people such as yourself who share our commitment and vision, which is why I am writing to you as a previous supporter of the Heart Foundation to ask you to send a gift of \$<ask1> before that date.

4. Single giver > 12 months

On 8th of September I have an important meeting where we will discuss how much we have available for funding for the next round. Your gift of \$<don amt> <in year> shows me that you care about the work the Heart Foundation is doing. I understand that you have your reasons for not giving in the past year, but I am writing to you as a previous supporter to ask you to send a gift of \$<ask1> before my September meeting.

5. Recruited through door knock

On 8th of September I have an important meeting where we will discuss how much funding we have available for research next year. Your support as part of our door knock <in year> shows me that you care about the work the Heart Foundation is doing. As one of our kind supporters I am writing to you to ask you to send a gift of \$<ask1> before my September meeting.

6. Door knocked this year, and donor (WE ARE EXCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE DOORKNOCKING FOR US THIS YEAR)

On 8th of September I have an important meeting where we will discuss how much we have available for funding for the next round. Your support as part of our door knock this year and your kind gift of \$<last don amt> shows me that you care very much about the work the Heart Foundation is doing. As one of our kind supporters I am writing to you to ask you to send a gift of \$<ask1> before my September meeting.

7. Lapsed

On 8th of September I have an important meeting where we will discuss how much funding we have available for research next year. Your gift of \$<don amt> in <month/year> shows me that you care about the work the Heart Foundation is doing. I understand that you

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have your reasons for not giving in the past <no of months>, but I am writing to you as a previous supporter to ask you to send a gift of \$<ask1> before my September meeting.

8. Gave to tax

On 8th of September I have an important meeting where we will discuss how much funding we have available for research next year. I am writing to ask you to send a gift of \$<ask1> before that date.

9. Donor

On 8th of September I have an important meeting where we will discuss how much funding we have available for research next year. I am writing to ask you to send a gift of \$<ask1> before that date. You have supported our work in the past, <most recently with your kind gift of \$<last gift> in <month>> [if not tax].

10. DEFAULT

On 8th of September I have an important meeting where we will discuss how much funding we have available for research next year. I am writing to ask you to send a gift of \$<ask1> before that date.

If any of the above gave to tax add line:

Thank you for your gift of \$<don amt> to our recent Tax Appeal. The money raised from that appeal will go towards improving the lives of Australians living with cardiovascular disease. I am writing to you again so soon because we still don't have the budget available for next years research program

Variable 2

VIC

In 2005, nearly half of Heart Foundation research is being carried out in Victoria, in our leading hospitals, universities and other research institutions. Your gift of \$<ask1> will help us continue to fund the groundbreaking research which is needed to save the lives of thousands of Victorians and other Australians every year.

NSW

In 2005, close to \$1.4 million of Heart Foundation funds have been allocated to research in NSW, in our leading hospitals, universities and other research institutions. Your gift of \$<ask1> will help us continue to fund the groundbreaking research needed to save the lives of thousands of people in NSW and around Australia every year.

QLD

In 2005, over \$800,000 of Heart Foundation funds have been allocated to research in Queensland hospitals, universities and other institutions. Your gift of \$<ask1> will help us continue to lead the way in innovative and ground breaking research which is needed to save the lives of thousands of Queenslanders and other Australians.

SA

In 2005, over \$658,000 of Heart Foundation funds have been allocated to research in South Australia, including projects based at the Royal Adelaide Hospital, University of Adelaide, The Hanson Institute and the Institute of Medical & Veterinary Science and CSIRO. Your

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gift of \$<ask1> will help us continue to lead the way in innovative and ground breaking research which is needed to save the lives of thousands of South Australians and people all over the country.

WA

In 2005, over \$500,000 of Heart Foundation funds have been allocated to research in West Australian hospitals, universities and other institutions. Your gift of \$<ask1> will help us continue to lead the way in innovative and ground breaking research which is needed to save the lives of thousands of West Australians and people all over the country.

NT

The Heart Foundation has dedicated close to \$160,000 of heart health research funding to the Northern Territory in 2005. Your gift of \$<ask1> will make a difference to our work improving the heart health of people of all ages in the Northern Territory and across Australia.

TAS

In 2005, the Heart Foundation has dedicated close to \$140,000 of heart health research funding to Tasmanian hospitals, universities and institutions. Your gift of \$<ask1> will make a difference to our work improving the heart health of people of all ages in Tasmania and across Australia.

ACT

In 2005, the Heart Foundation has dedicated close to \$50,000 of heart health research funding to ACT hospitals, universities and institutions. Your gift of \$<ask1> will make a difference to our work improving the heart health of people of all ages in the ACT and all around Australia.

Default (If record has no state)

In 2005, several million dollars of Heart Foundation funds have been allocated to research in our leading hospitals, universities and other research institutions. Your gift of \$<ask1> will help us continue to fund the groundbreaking research which is needed to save the lives of thousands of Australians every year.