

Subject: Swifty Foundation Launches New Research Initiative  
To:



## News Release

**For Immediate Release**  
**March 13, 2019**

### **Swifty Foundation Launches Research Initiative Called Gift from a Child**

WOODRIDGE, Ill.—Swifty Foundation, a pediatric brain cancer research foundation based in Woodridge, Ill., has announced the launch of a new research initiative called Gift from a Child. The mission of Gift from a Child is to increase post-mortem brain tissue donations through advocacy, partnerships and education of families who have just lost a child to brain cancer.

The initiative kicked off in December 2018 after Swifty Foundation hosted a forum of several families who had donated their child's post mortem brain tissue. The purpose of the forum was to gather the families' advice on how to effectively educate and advocate for autopsy tissue donations. Patti Gustafson, who is a co-founder of Swifty Foundation and attended the forum, explained the necessity of a program like Gift from a Child for both pediatric brain cancer research and a family's peace of mind.

“Although most people today consent to be an organ donor, when I was young, almost no one considered donating their organs. Today, very few physicians, hospice workers and families see the value of autopsy tissue donation as a way to bring some good from unimaginable tragedy.”

Since the forum, Gift from a Child has created a leadership team comprised of families who attended the forum. The team is currently developing Gift from a Child's Family Companion program, which will match a family who is considering donating their child's tissue with a family who has already gone through the donation process. By creating these one on one relationships, families will have an opportunity to ask personal questions regarding their decision to donate and will be offered support and empathy during an extremely difficult time.



A group photo of the families who attended the forum in Philadelphia. Several of the families present have created foundations of their own.

(more)

At the beginning of this year, Gift from a Child launched a website (GiftfromaChild.org) and has created social media accounts on Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. The website and the accounts will all be used to increase awareness of the necessity of post-mortem brain tissue donations for research and to explain the simple two-step process of donating: written consent for the child to become a tissue donor and a phone call to a tissue navigator at the time of the child's death. The website also includes blog posts and videos of parents discussing their child's donation process and the comfort they have from knowing their child's life made an impact on pediatric brain cancer research.

Patti Gustafson and her husband Al Gustafson, who is also a co-founder of Swifty Foundation, experienced this comfort firsthand when their 15-year-old son Michael donated his tissue after passing away from medulloblastoma, a type of brain cancer, in January 2013. Shortly after, the Gustafson family, which includes Michael's twin sister Bridget Gustafson and older brother Ian Gustafson, founded Swifty Foundation with the mission of raising money for research, awareness and advocacy for pediatric brain cancer research.

###

For More Information:  
Ginny Mclean  
Communications and Outreach Director  
(630)388-9261  
outreach@swiftyfoundation.org



<https://www.facebook.com/GiftFromAChild/>



<https://www.instagram.com/giftfromachild/>



<https://twitter.com/GiftFromaChild1>



<https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/giftfromachild/>