

Girls Love Mail

www.GirlsLoveMail.com

The gift of hand-written letters to a woman newly diagnosed with breast cancer.

Letter Writing Kit for Teachers

Thank you for having your students write letters for Girls Love Mail. The letters are given to women going through breast cancer treatment via cancer centers. Each woman receives one letter, so this is a personal experience for the letter recipient and writer.

Included in this kit you have:

- FAQs and Letter Writing Tips
- What is Breast Cancer Handout
- Letter Writing Handout
- Group Cover Sheet
- Stationery
- Sample Letters

STATIONERY

You may use any note card, stationery, or paper that **can be folded or fits in our special GLM Envelope measuring 4.75" x 6.5"** (announcement size). Each letter is placed in a GLM envelope for distribution. You can also use the included Girls Love Mail stationery.

MAIL LETTERS

All letters may be sent in one envelope to:

Girls Love Mail
193 Blue Ravine Road, Suite 120
Folsom, California 95630

QUESTIONS

Gina Mulligan, Founder

E: ginamulligan@girlslovemail.com

P: 916-805-5094 (PST)

Girls Love Mail Guidelines and FAQs

1. Hand-Write Your Letters

Your letter must be hand-written. If unable, please include on each letter a short explanation. (Ex: "This letter is typed because I have difficulty holding a pen.")

2. Three Sentence Minimum

We ask for at least three sentences of hand-written text on each letter. You can include up to five letters with the exact same message. Remember, you're sending a hand-made gift.

3. Quality over Quantity

Because every letter is a gift, please take your time and write something the recipient will treasure. GLM wants every recipient to feel special. But please do not copy letters from our samples or the Dear Friend gift book.

4. Greeting and Signature

Include a greeting like "Dear Friend" or "Dear Sister." Your salutation can include just your first name. For children, we love when you also include the age or grade level.

I'm just a kid, can I write a letter? Yes, anyone who wants to be nice to another person can write a letter. The best way to start your letter is with "Dear Friend" or "Dear Sister."

Do I need to hand-write my letter? Can I draw a picture? Yes to both. Hand-written letters with pictures are great. Remember, your letter is like a little hand-made gift—feel free to decorate it and make it fun.

What should I write about? The idea is to help a patient who has just found out they have cancer. You can tell them that they are not alone and that you are thinking of them. You can also wish they get better soon.

Do I need special stationery or envelopes? No. You can write your letter on any note card, stationery, or other paper. All we ask is that your letter fits or folds into an announcement-size envelope (4.75" x 6.5").

Should I sign and date my letter? It's best to sign just your first name, but please do NOT put a date on your letter.

Is it okay to talk about God, the Lord, or prayer in my letter? The goal is to help each recipient regardless of race, religion, age, type of treatment, or cancer stage. For this reason, please refrain from religious references and other non-inclusive wording.

About the Recipient

What You KNOW:	What you <u>DON'T</u> Know:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Woman• Recently diagnosed with breast cancer.• Currently going through some form of cancer treatment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Race• Age• Religion• Type of treatment• Cancer Stage or Prognosis

Letter Writing Tips

- Begin your letter "Dear Friend" or "Dear Sister."
- Think about someone you care about as you write. You can also share your personal experiences.
- Try to focus on the recipient and how they might feel. Think about what someone could say to make you feel better.
- Tell the truth. It's okay to say you don't know what they are going through.
- Be sure to include three full sentences. Not three lines but three sentences.
- Write from the heart and you can't go wrong.

What is Breast Cancer?

from kidshealth.org

You may have heard about special events, like walks or races, to raise money for breast cancer research. Or maybe you've seen people wear those little pink ribbons on their clothes.

✓	I knew that
★	This is important
?	I have a question
!	This is surprising

Breast (pronounced: **brest**) cancer is a common **cancer** among women.

It occurs rarely in men and it doesn't affect kids. But kids must learn about it, so they can be aware of how much it affects the community and so that they learn how to check for it when they are older.

What Is Breast Cancer?

The human body is made of tiny building blocks called cells. Your body creates them, replacing those that die with new ones. Usually, the body creates healthy, normal cells that do just what they're supposed to do. This includes cells in the breasts, the two rounded areas on the front of the chest. But if a cell changes into an abnormal, sometimes harmful form, it can divide quickly over and over again without dying, making many, many copies of itself. When this happens, a **tumor**, abnormal body cells grouped together in the form of a mass or lump, can start to form and grow.

Breast cancer is a kind of tumor that develops in the cells of a person's breast. You may think that only women can get breast cancer, but because all people have breast tissue, men can get breast cancer as well — though this is very rare.

A tumor can form anywhere in the body. Someone has cancer when those abnormal cells will not stop growing, and then cause sickness in the body.

Someone with breast cancer may have cancer cells in just one part of the breast, which might be felt as a lump. The cancer can spread throughout one or both breasts. Sometimes breast cancer spreads to other parts of the body, like the bones, the liver, or elsewhere.

Why Do People Get Breast Cancer?

Any woman can get breast cancer, but doctors have found that certain factors make some women more likely to get it.

Family history: A woman whose mother, sister, aunt, or daughter has had breast cancer is more likely to get breast cancer.

Age: As women get older, they are more at risk for breast cancer. Teens — as well as women in their twenties and thirties — are less likely to get breast cancer.

Diet and lifestyle choices: Women who smoke, eat high-fat diets, drink alcohol, and don't get enough exercise may be more at risk for developing breast cancer.

What Are the Signs of Breast Cancer?

A woman who has breast cancer may have no problems, or she may find a painless lump in her breast. If women examine their breasts monthly, they can help find lumps or other changes that a doctor should examine.

Most breast lumps are **not** cancer, but all lumps should be checked out by a doctor to be sure. Breast lumps that are not cancer may be scar tissue or cysts (fluid-filled lumps or sacs) or they can be due to normal breast changes associated with hormone changes or aging.

Breast Cancer Treatment

Treatment for breast cancer usually depends on the type of cancer and whether the cancer has spread outside of the breast to the rest of the body.

Here are some common treatments:

lumpectomy (say: lum-PEK-tuh-mee), which removes the cancerous tumor from the breast.

mastectomy (say: ma-STEK-tuh-mee), which removes the whole breast.

radiation therapy and chemotherapy, which are often used after lumpectomy or mastectomy to make sure that all the cancer cells are destroyed and do not grow back.

Radiation (say: ray-dee-AY-shun) therapy uses high-energy X-rays to kill the cancerous cells. Chemotherapy (say: kee-mo-THER-uh-pee), or chemo, is special medicine that travels throughout the entire body and kills cancer cells.

Breast Cancer Prevention

Doctors and scientists are working to find cures for breast cancer. They are researching new medicines that may even help prevent the disease. But in the meantime, it's important for women to catch the disease early.

Regular mammograms — together with monthly breast self-exams — are the best ways for women to protect themselves. You may want to ask the women you care about if they are taking these important steps to stay healthy.

Writing Letters to Breast Cancer Patients

Things to Keep in Mind When Writing...

1. Religion, Language, and Dying

RELIGION

The goal is to help each recipient regardless of race, religion, age, type of treatment, or cancer stage. For this reason, please refrain from religious references and other non-inclusive wording.

LANGUAGE

In our modern age, there are lots of phrases that we all use and hear, especially about breast cancer. So along with banning the use of really bad words (you know the ones), the following terms/words are also banned:

- Cancer Sucks (yes, but may be offensive)
- Kick Cancer's Butt (being extra cautious)

DYING

It may be difficult for someone newly diagnosed to hear about others who have died from cancer or other diseases. You can certainly mention your loved ones without sharing the outcome. For example, "My grandmother fought breast cancer and she liked to wear a different wig every day."

2. Greeting, Signature, and NO Date

The best way to start your letter is with "Dear Friend" or "Dear Sister." We encourage you to sign just your first name and last initial (Gina M.). And because we don't know a distribution time frame, please **do not date** your letters or reference holidays/seasons.

3. Hand-Write Your Letter with at Least Three Sentences

You are doing more than writing a letter, you're sending a hand-made gift.

4. Write From the Heart

No matter how clumsy the words, if it comes from the heart you can't miss!

Some sentence stems to help you get started:

Dear Friend

Dear Fighter

Dear Strong Woman

Dear Sister

My name is _____ and I am _____ years old.

I am a Girls Scout with Troop # _____ .

Something you should know about me is...

I am writing to you because...

I hope... I wonder... My wish for you is...

Sincerely,

expressions, love, sisters, eyes, mother, friend's wife, daughter, child, young, old, friend, encourage, support, love, share, write, heart, soul, inspiring, failure, success, encouragement, friends, love, together. girls love mail, write, love, express, share, open, heart, encourage, support, love, sisters, mother, daughter, friend, laughter, joy, sister, sister, happiness, sadness, encourage, support, share, kindness, love, heart, laughter, joy, sister, sister, happiness, sadness, encourage, support, share, kindness, love, heart,

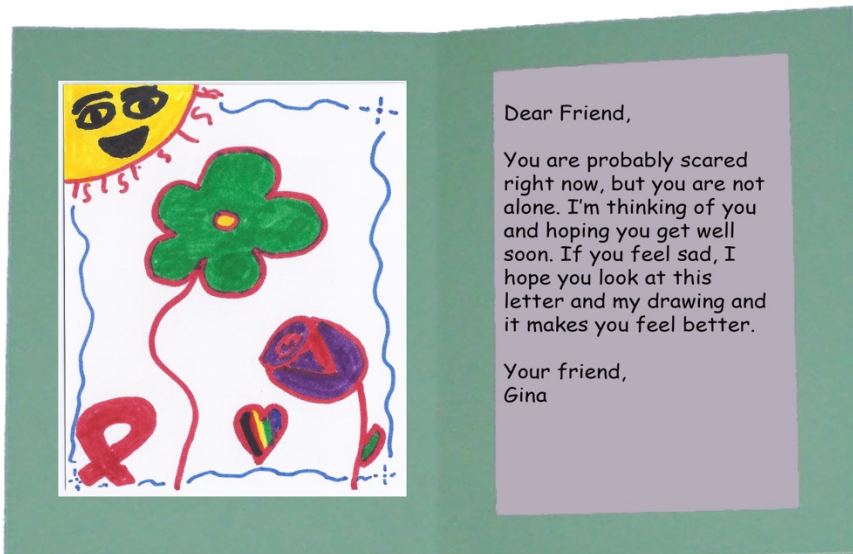
Girls Love Mail



Sample Girls Love Mail Letters

Elementary Age

(All letters hand-written. Typed here for clarity)



Teen

Dear Friend

Hello! My name is Cat. I hope this letter puts a smile on your face!! You should believe in yourself that you are a strong, beautiful & loved woman. Please don't feel like you are alone in this battle. You are worth every step of the way. You will beat + win this battle.

I may not know exactly how you feel but know that I myself am battling a horrible disease. Do I do understand what you are going through w/ regards to treatment. There will be days where you may feel like not doing your treatment but know that you are WORTH the fight. Keep STRONG & KEEP GOING!!

I watched a dear friend battle cancer for five years. He showed me strength that I've never seen before. His strength was completely amazing to me through his battle.

Please know that I am thinking of you and wish you the best during your journey. I keep telling myself that "I am worth getting better!" I believe that "you are WORTH getting better!"

Wishing you All the Best,

Cat M.