April 30, 2020

Dear Parent:

First, and most importantly, thank you for championing the mission of the American Heart Association and coming to us with your feedback. We share in your disappointment for the many things our loved ones are missing out on or having to wait for due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We couldn’t have imagined a situation where we were writing a letter like this. Like you, we’re doing the best we can and looking forward to better times ahead.

No one wants to thank those at the heart of the Kids Heart Challenge more than us. Our gratitude for these heroes is off the charts. It’s because of people like them that the American Heart Association has swiftly responded to the urgent need for heart and stroke research on COVID-19, guidelines for our frontline workers, and trust-worthy health information.

More than a million children participate in the American Heart Association’s school-based programs. To individually ship the thank you gifts to each household would be an incredible cost and redirect mission funding at this critical time. As we learn more about COVID-19 and how it unfairly impacts people with underlying conditions including congenital heart defects, we know that our work – and your support of it – are perhaps more important than ever before.

Like other nonprofits experience a steep decline in donations due to cancelled events and the economic challenges our country is facing, the American Heart Association is making difficult budgeting decisions while remaining 100% focused on moving our lifesaving mission forward. We are especially grateful for your patience and understanding for the delayed shipping of Kids Heart Challenge thank you gifts. We hope you and your student feel a sense of pride that by waiting a bit longer for thank you gifts, they’re helping even more people.

We are eager to resume normal operations and get those thank you gifts in route to schools for distribution. The moment we are cleared by health experts to mobilize, we will provide an update to your school coordinator.

Once again, thank you for understanding and your commitment to helping hearts and saving lives.

Lisa Chiravanich