

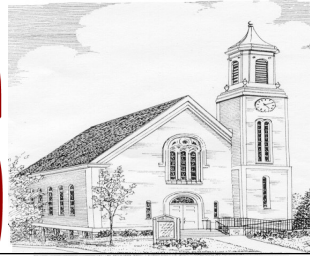
First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
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**January 2020
Belfry Chimes
First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
Portland, Connecticut**

The Belfry Chimes



January 2020
Newsletter

The First Congregational Church
554 Main Street
Portland, Connecticut 06480

The Reverend Jane E. Hawken

Office (860) 342-3244

Cell phone 860 918-5415

Email jhawken@sbcglobal.net

Office Email address first.church.pct@sbcglobal.net

Web site www.firstchurchportlandct.org

Please look us up on Facebook,
The First Congregational Church of Portland, CT

DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Ann Labby (860) 614-4826 labbyannm@gmail.com

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Kasha Breau Cell (860) 983-6065

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Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

CHURCH SEXTON

Ann Labby

NURSERY SCHOOL

(860) 342-1111

Nursery School Email address

1stchurchnurseryschool@gmail.com

FELLOWSHIP HALL (860) 342-1111

Welcoming Statement

*We, The First Congregational Church of
Portland, Connecticut, are an Open and Affirming church.*

*With God's grace, we continue to be a
congregation that includes persons of every race,
ethnicity, age, family configuration, marital status,
mental and physical ability, economic status,
gender identity, gender expression, and sexual
orientation. All are welcome to share in the life,
sacraments, missions, responsibilities and blessings of
participation in our community of faith.*

THE BUILDING IS ACCESSIBLE.

Assistive Hearing Devices available.

LARGE PRINT BULLETINS AVAILABLE.

- 1/5 Epiphany Sunday**
9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal
10:00 a.m. Worship, Communion, Church School,
Pass-It-On Food Cart
Worship Assistant: Nancy Johnson
Communion Presenters: George Law, Megan Ettlinger,
Mike Enright, Phyllis Clark, Faith Fraulino
Deacon: Faith Fraulino
Ushers:
11:15 a.m. Coffee Hour:
- 1/12 The First Sunday after Epiphany**
9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal
10:00 a.m. Worship, Church School
Worship Assistant: Nancy Johnson
Deacon: Connie Wache
Ushers:
11:15 a.m. Coffee Hour:
- 1/19 The Second Sunday after Epiphany**
9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal
10:00 a.m. Worship, Church School
Worship Assistant: Nancy Johnson
Deacon: Mike Enright
Ushers:
11:15 a.m. Coffee Hour:
- 1/26 The Third Sunday after Epiphany**
9:00 a.m. Choir rehearsal
10:00 a.m. Worship, Church School
Worship Assistant: Nancy Johnson
Deacon: Megan Ettlinger
Ushers:
11:15 a.m. Coffee Hour:
11:30 a.m. Annual Meeting

**Happy
New Year!**

Call to the Annual Program and Budget Meeting

The members of the First Congregational Church of Portland, Connecticut are hereby notified of the Annual Program and Budget Meeting to be held on Sunday, January 26, 2020 in Fellowship Hall during coffee hour for the following purposes:

1. To receive and act upon the Annual Program Reports for the 2019 year.
2. To act upon the 2020 Budget as presented by the Board of Finance.
3. To conduct an election of Church Officers and Board and Committee Members.
4. To act upon any other business proper to come before said meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeannette Hodge, President
Marcie Clark, Clerk

We Remember in Our Prayers

During the past month we prayed for:

Carol Carnemolla, Anita Harris, Fritz Kraskowski, Natalie Bevis, Mary Bresett, Stew Richardson, Wayne Pierce, Jim Langager, Alexandra Watson-Pelepey, Robert McKinney, Elaine Law, Steve Hodge, Harold Hall, Laurie Peterson, Gilbert Lawrence, Rita Richter, Martin Moon, Steven Winakor, Tracy Johnston, Marge Tacey, Ralph Bonanno, Mark Vetrano, Eleanor Rodrigue, and the families and friends of Alice Sheehan and Mike Hall

TLC: THE LUNCH CREW SET TO LAUNCH



The “old” traditional family Sunday dinner has become a nostalgic memory for those of us fortunate to have experienced that in decades past. However, not all that long ago, there was a tradition of church folks, who had no one with whom to enjoy Sunday dinner, feasting on potluck fare once a month

after coffee hour in Fellowship Hall. It was a quieter, more lengthy time in which to socialize after visiting with friends immediately after the service.

I, Linda Cunningham, enjoyed many such gatherings and I am hoping some of you would like to revive this newer tradition. I have the backing of the Membership Committee and the church calendar looks good for a trial run on January 12 with a snow date of January 19.

I would like to hear from you if interested, to know how many might attend. You would not be locked in to every month – come when you are able. I’d like to keep it at the same time each month, but that depends on other church activities. Please email me at: ctcolinda13@gmail.com; or call 860-852-3383 by January 8 with comments or to express your interest in attending.

January Birthdays

- 1 Ava Rose France
- 1 Avery McNall
- 2 Brody Quinn
- 2 Alison Sroka
- 3 Joe Aresco
- 4 Bruce Morrison
- 4 Chelsea MacDonald
- 5 Brian O’Connor
- 5 Barbara Luce
- 6 Nick Vetrano
- 8 Henry Prescott Jr.
- 8 Veronica Kandro
- 9 Lillian Carroll
- 10 Kristin Medvecky
- 10 Mike Siena
- 11 Mike Klick
- 11 Reagan Fitzgibbons
- 12 Arlene Lastrina
- 13 Scott Pellin
- 13 Drew France
- 14 Ronald Sibley
- 14 Robert Doolittle
- 14 Pam Tyrol
- 15 Danielle Pierce
- 17 Evan Guilmette
- 18 Faith Fraulino
- 18 Elaine Law
- 21 Charles Coe
- 21 Megan Ettlinger
- 21 Virginia Hodge
- 22 Robert Chamis
- 22 Bill Katt
- 24 David Dole
- 24 Meghan Weeks
- 25 Joshua Perrotti
- 26 Chad MacDonald
- 27 Estelle Labbadia
- 27 Louis Labbadia
- 28 Jacob Levesque
- 29 Norman Rossignol
- 30 Nancy Johnson
- 30 Gail Porteus
- 30 Jared Pellin
- 31 Dennis Heffernan
- 31 Angela Aresco



Gratitude Journal ~ January 2020

A special thank you to:

- ~ **The Flower Committee** for decorating the sanctuary and church doors.
- ~ **All who donated** to the fund for Christmas poinsettia dedications.
- ~ **All who baked for the cookie sale**, contributed to the tag sale, assisted with the sale, and helped prepare the snowman soup packages, gift mugs and basket items. And all who shopped at the sale!
- ~ **The families** that led the Advent Wreath lightings during worship.
- ~ **Ann Labby and the Board of Christian Education** for all their special additions to the Christmas season including coffee hours throughout the month and the Church School children for decorating the Christmas tree.
- ~ **The Board of Facilities Management** and all who helped with snow removal and the basement hot water tank project and the steeple evaluation and repair.
- ~ **All who provided items** for the Board of Missions "Giving Tree" and the Board of Missions for organizing this important annual event.
- ~ **All the musicians, readers, and participants** in the Christmas Eve Services.
- ~ **All who are working on** baskets, baked goods, crafts and preparations for the Chocolate Fest.
- ~ **All who contributed** to the Christmas Fund, the Jumbo Christmas Card, and the Christmas Eve collection for the Portland Fuel Bank.
- ~ **All who have said, "YES!"** when the Nominating Committee called to recruit members for the Church Boards and Committees.
- ~ **All who served as Officers and on Boards and Committees this past year** ~ thank you for sharing your time and talents.
- ~ **All those who served** as ushers, candle lighters, bell ringers, flower donors, and coffee hour hosts throughout the 2019 year. Your willingness to offer your time to the church is gratefully appreciated.
- ~ **Nancy Spooner** for the donation of the winter evergreen arrangement in the Memorial Garden.
- ~ **Shirley and Cliff Barrett** for their donation to purchase the holiday bulletins.
- ~ **All who contributed financially this past year, and all who pledged** for our 2020 "The Future's So Bright" stewardship campaign.

Chocolate Fest Notes!

A gift that keeps on giving! The Women's Fellowship would love to recycle your unwanted Christmas presents and new or hardly ever used gift items that you may have received. Look for the decorated box in Fellowship Hall for your contributions. These will be used to help create baskets. And yes, we will take that box of Chocolates off your hands.

Jewelry needed! This section of the chocolate fest is always popular so if you have used necklaces, bracelets, earrings, pins, etc. or new ones you may have bought and will never use, we have a special place for them. Look for the basket in Fellowship Hall for your contributions. The earlier we get them the better.

With heartfelt thanks to all~ Nancy

Baskets appreciated! Now is the time to start thinking about what type of basket you will contribute to our 23rd annual festival. Please let Nancy Johnson know what your pleasure is. She can be reached at 860 342-4098 or email her at nlj1952@comcast.net.

So far, we have the following:

Car Cleaning – Robin Richardson & Sharon Bergman

Poppin' Good Fun – Robin Richardson

Here Comes Peter Cottontail – Nancy Johnson

For the Greater Good – Faith Fraulino

Super Bowl Basket – Margaret Stewart

The British are Coming – Jan Poet

Anyone up to doing a Chocolate Lovers Basket? Other ideas include: Tea, Coffee, Children's Activity, Bird Lovers, Kitchen Comfort, Picnic, the possibilities are endless!

Volunteers Needed!

The Board of Deacons is looking for our church members and friends to **host a Coffee Hour and/or to Usher** on Sunday morning.

There are sign-up sheets in Fellowship Hall and we would love to see your name on them. We are so appreciative to those who fill in the blanks. Consider yourself blessed when you help out your church in this way.





**Annual Chocolate Fest Workshop
Wednesday, January 8 at 7:00 p.m.**

Are you craving something sweet? Looking for something that really satisfies? You need nothing else but a little bit of CHOCOLATE! What is your pleasure? Is it dark chocolate or milk chocolate, candy bars or truffles? Whatever your favorite might be, when you indulge in its sweet mouth-watering taste and it melts on your tongue, it can't help but warm your spirit and make you feel loved and relaxed. Therefore, your life should be filled with chocolate.

It was Forrest Gump who said "My momma always said, "Life was like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get." This is so true because our lives are filled with bitter nuggets of pain, as well as, sweet morsels of joy. Some days are dark & lumpy; others are light and smooth. Whatever the shape, flavor & texture of our days, and however our lives are packaged, we can savor the rich indulgence of God's endless supply of grace in Christ! He wraps us in His love and fills us with the sweet filling of faith in our Savior.

On this evening when we prepare for our annual Chocolate Fest won't you please grace us with your presence? You will be able to choose how you would like to contribute from a variety of tasks that are waiting to be done. There is always something simple to do. **If you are craving chocolate and grace this is the place to be!**

If you ever have any questions, please contact Nancy Johnson and she would love to answer them for you!

CHOCOLATE FEST WORKERS TAKE NOTE

Wear festive Valentine colors (red, pink, white) or hearts unless you are a waitress and instructed otherwise. Be sure to look for your name tag when you arrive.

All workers are asked not to park at church as we need to allow ample parking for our customers. Carpool, get dropped off, or park at Gildersleeve School, or the professional center.

All workers should arrive by 12:15 p.m. unless otherwise instructed and please note that the fellowship hall door will be locked at 12:45 p.m. due to the fact that customers in the past have been arriving early.

We will all gather in Fellowship Hall at 12:50 p.m. for a moment of prayer before the fest begins.

All workers are asked to help pick up your work area as the day progresses to make it easier for the cleanup crew upon their arrival around 4:30 p.m.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU one and all for the time you have already given and/or will give in making this the wonderful event it has always been in the past.



**23rd ANNUAL
MID-WINTER CHOCOLATE FEST
Saturday, February 1, 2020**

1:00 – 4:30 p.m.

(Snow Date, February 2nd)

The world of Chocolate is once again happening in our church thanks in advance to the help we always receive from so many women, men & youth who volunteer each year. We seem to be growing bigger and better with many of our faithful customers returning to celebrate chocolate with us. Let us spread the LOVE for chocolate together.

SO HOW WILL YOU HELP?

- 1. SET-UP-SUNDAY, 1/26 after Annual Meeting.** Help is needed to move tables and chairs. All help appreciated.
- 2. WORK THE EVENT! Waitresses or waiters always needed!** Car parkers, dish washers, people to work at the booths, greeter. Sign the board in the Fellowship Hall or speak to Nancy.
- 3. DONATIONS** of craft or gift items most appreciated.
- 4. THEMED GIFT BASKET** donations always needed. Come up with your own theme or contribute items to someone else's.
- 5. BAKE SALE DONATIONS** – Chocolate and/or non-chocolate. **Best sellers:** Cookies, Pies, Breads.
Feel free to be creative with packaging!
- 6. CANDY DONATIONS** Fudge and other new creations would add so much to this booth. Sugar free candy anyone?
- 7. Come to our scheduled WORKSHOP:**
Wednesday, January 8, 2020, 7:00 p.m.
- 8. COME AND ENJOY THE FESTIVAL!**
- 9. And if you still can't help in any of these areas,** monetary donations are always very much appreciated.

GET INVOLVED! It's fun!

QUESTIONS? Ask Nancy Johnson- 860 342-4098 or email her at nlj1952@comcast.net.

CHOCOLATE FEST BAKERS TAKE NOTE

Baked items, chocolate and/or non-chocolate, can be brought in anytime on Friday, January 31st up to 5:00 p.m. or between 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. on Saturday morning the 1st. Best Sellers- Cookies, Pies, Breads **Important-** Please label the name of your baked item. Include nuts (and type of nut) or no nuts, gluten free or any other specific information that may be helpful to our customers and **Feel free to be creative with packaging!**

A Note from Alanon

The holidays can be especially difficult for those who have a drinking or drug problem, as well as those who care for that person. AA, Al-Anon, Alateen, and NA programs, have made tremendous differences in the lives of millions of people. There are weekly meetings of these groups in every part of the state. You can find a meeting near you by going on line to aa-ct.org or ctalanon.org. By doing this you could be a life saver.

As an additional note, there is an Alanon meeting every Sunday night at 7:00 p.m. here at First Congregational Church and a Narcotics Anonymous meeting each Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. here at the church.

Prayer Shawl Ministry News!

We have a great group of women who gather on Tuesday afternoons at 2:00 p.m. to knit and enjoy fellowship together. This is a wonderful ministry that we offer to our church members and beyond. These shawls are meant for anyone who may be in need of comfort, love, and healing. What our hands and hearts create allows others to encounter God's love in a tangible way. Our shawls are gifts of love and our work and the care we put into them link us to God's grace.

When shawls are finished, we place our hands upon them and bless them before they are given away. We recently have purchased labels that will be sewn on signifying that they are from our church. Our ministry is growing as we have been approached to share some of our shawls with Hartford Hospital, which we plan to do throughout the year.

We would love to have more knitters, but if that is not something you can do, perhaps you could donate money towards the cost of the yarn. Checks should be made out to The Women's Fellowship and given to Nancy Johnson, President or Faith Fraulino, Treasurer.

Your thoughtfulness will be very much appreciated.

A Note of Thanks

Thank you from the Board of Music to the Carolers who helped bring a little Christmas Cheer to the folks at Portland Care and Rehab!

Thank you to Clara & Evan Guilmette for playing during our 12/15 worship service and also for making caroling with the Church School children even more special.

AMAZING GRACE FOR WOMEN

DATE: Saturday, March 21, 2020

PLACE: Guest House Retreat and Conference Center

TYPE: Women's Day Retreat



“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.”

Ephesians 2:8

The Bible explicitly says that grace is a gift from God. It is the unmerited, loving favor and graciousness of our Creator. And do we have a gift for you. We will celebrate the grace of friendship at a one-day retreat which you will not want to miss. Give yourself a gift this year by registering for this special day which will include a delicious luncheon buffet. The cost for the retreat is just \$30 per person. Details can be found in the Women's Fellowship booklet, but don't delay as space is somewhat limited. We already have 6 women registered! Contact Karen Rettich (karen.rettich@yahoo.com) as soon as you know you would like to attend.

DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS MARCH 1, 2020!

Winter Storm Cancellations

During the winter season, if there is a snow or ice storm warning or in process, please turn to: Channel 3-WFSB at www.wfsb.com; or WVIT at www.nbcconnecticut.com for Sunday worship or church event cancellations.



Pass-It-On Food Cart

On the first Sunday of every month we take a collection of non-perishable food items for the Portland Food Bank. Please bring any canned, packaged or bagged grocery item to donate to the food pantry.

Items to consider donating are individually packaged foods such as crackers or juice boxes that can fit in children's lunch boxes. Paper products, cleaning supplies and personal care items are also good choices.

Important Reminder from the Church Office

Attention Board and Committee Chairs:

Annual Reports are due in the church office by Thursday, January 2.

Thank you, Margaret



Dear Friends,

At the risk of stating the obvious, we are entering a new year and a new decade. I wonder if we will be calling the decade “the 20s” – and yet, hasn’t that name already been taken?! Specifically, 100 years ago?!

The 1920’s were marked in part by flappers, silent movies, jazz, Prohibition, the stock market rise and crash, the League of Nations, the Scopes Trial, and the Harlem Renaissance. Some of the famous people were Charlie Chaplin, Greta Garbo, Babe Ruth, Georgia O’Keefe, Charles Lindbergh, and F. Scott Fitzgerald. The exuberance of the time gave the decade the name: “The Roaring Twenties.”

So here we are on the cusp of a new ‘20s. And since “roaring” has been taken, how about calling our new decade: ***The Soaring Twenties?*** Here at the church, let’s enter the new year and the new decade with all the exuberance and faithfulness needed to soar!

Together as a community of faith, ***let’s soar*** in generosity, in enthusiasm, and in dedication. ***Let’s soar*** in our eagerness to follow Jesus as he leads us to share his love.

In this new year and this new decade, let us soar!

The Reverend Jane Hawken

Epiphany Sunday, January 5, 2020 *Tell Us About Your Star!*



Come to worship on the first Sunday of 2020. Our 10:00 a.m. service will include a celebration of Epiphany also called Three Kings Day, Día de Reyes, and Little Christmas. The Sacrament of Communion will be offered, and the children’s Journey to the Crèche will conclude with a celebration of the magi reaching the Bethlehem stable.

Last year on Epiphany Sunday, paper stars were distributed to worshippers. Each star had a word printed on the star. There will be an opportunity during the January 5 worship service for you to tell us about your star. Some questions to consider: Do you still have your star? Where do you keep it? Is your word meaningful to you? Why or why not?

Please let Rev. Hawken know by January 1 (jhawken@sbcglobal.net) if you would like to share your thoughts during the Sunday, January 5 morning worship service. Whether or not you choose to speak about your star on January 5, please join us for worship as we begin the new year!

Meet the New Members Who Joined the Church on December 1

Pat Jones is retired and she lives in Portland. She has five children and eleven grandchildren. Pat enjoys reading and music.

Samantha and Mike Klick and their daughter Morgan live in East Hampton. Mike is an accountant with CT DOT and he enjoys football, video games and playing Dungeons & Dragons. Sam is a stay-at-home mom and her hobbies include yoga, reading, herbalism, and natural health and nutrition.

Ivy and Nelson Maurice have five children, eleven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. They are retired and live in East Hampton. Ivy enjoys sewing and crafts.

Maria Mundo is retired and she recently moved to Portland. Maria’s hobbies include metal smith and basket weaving.

Patty and Joe Pizzichemi recently moved to Portland, and they have five children. Patty is a retired Special Education teacher, and enjoys decorating, needlework, quilting, and restoring doll-houses and collecting miniatures, singing, and tending to her chickens. Joe works at Berlin Steel and enjoys reading, hiking, and woodworking. Together they have fun kayaking, riding bikes, restoring old homes/barns, traveling throughout New England, and immersing themselves in anything to do with 18th Century Colonial America.

Christian Education Teaching Schedule

January 5	Week 1	Student Worship
January 12	Week 2	Regular Class
January 19	Week 3	Regular Class
January 26	Week 4	Regular Class
February 2	Week 1	Student Worship
February 9	Week 2	Regular Class
February 16	Week 3	Regular Class
February 23	Week 4	Regular Class

Silver Lake Camp

Applications are being taken for summer camp at the Silver Lake Conference Center in Sharon, Connecticut. This United Church of Christ summer camp is for all students going into 4th grade in September through high school. A brochure is available in the Christian Education corner of Fellowship Hall. Register online at www.silverlakeect.org. Financial aid is available. Please see Ann Labby for more information.

Board of Christian Education

The Board of Christian Education is looking forward to offering our church school students an exciting year of programs and activities in 2020! Thank you to all who help with our many programs- your time and talents are priceless!

A special thank you to the Christian Education Board for all their work and dedication to the youth of our church.

December was a very busy month. "The Little Drummer Boy" program was a great success. The children were all fabulous and truly brought the true meaning of Christmas into our hearts. Our Christmas Caroling following the pageant was so much fun. Thank you so much.

Thank you to all who have volunteered for Church School Teaching and will continue to June.

Our Youth Fellowship

High School Youth Group:

We are looking to get together on Thursday, January 9th at 6:00 p.m. to discuss the upcoming year. We will also be making tie-dye t-shirts, so please e-mail back with your t-shirt size if you plan on coming. Food will be provided!

This is the game plan to what our year will look like. We need your help to fill in the blanks!

December- community service event (coat drive)

February- fun event

April- community service event (God's Work, Our Hands)

June- fun event

August- community service event

October- fun event

December- community service event

Contact Megan Wache at megan.wache@gmail.com

Who Likes Roller Skating?

On Saturday, February 8 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. EVERYONE is invited to join us at the Middletown Rollerskating rink for an afternoon of fun. This is for ALL ages. The cost is \$10.00 which includes skate rental. Extra charge for inline skates. Please let me know if you will be joining us. You can also invite a friend to join us. E-mail me by February 1st at labbyannm@gmail.com It will be a fun family event.

The UNICEF collection boxes enabled our church to donate \$183.00 to UNICEF! Great Job!!!

Activity Tote Bags

Students, please feel free to bring an activity tote bag to your pew to use before worship begins. They are located in the back of the church. They have a book and an activity sheet for you to use. (Please use the lap board included in the tote.) Don't forget to bring your finished activity paper home with you and put crayons, pencils, and books back in the bags for the next person to use. Bags can be returned to the back of the church or in the basket behind the organist. We hope that by having the activity bags available, students will refrain from writing on the prayer request cards.

Are You a Dog or a Cat Lover?

In February there will be two containers set up in Fellowship Hall. One container is labeled CATS and the other DOGS. You can donate money to either container and at the end of February we will count the money to see which container has the most money. The church school students will donate all the proceeds to the mission project of their choice. So everyone is a winner! All members of the church are encouraged to participate in this fun church school mission project.

Jumbo Pretzel Sale

We will have a pretzel sale on Sunday, January 19 in Fellowship Hall following worship. This is a yummy treat after church. You can buy a plain, salted or cinnamon pretzel for only \$2.00. YUMM! The proceeds will be donated to a charity of the children's choosing.

Connecticut Children's Medical Center

Thank you all so much for your donations of games, books and activities for the children in the hospital.

Candle Lighters/Bell Ringers for January & February

January 5 – Bianca and Nicholas Vibberts

January 12 – Nolan O'Connor

January 19 – Ally Dudzinski

January 26 – Aiden Jahnke

February 2 – Brennan O'Connor

February 9 – Nate Dietrichsen

February 16 – Elijah Eckert

February 23 – Amelia Dietrichsen

SOCIAL MEDIA PERMISSION/RELEASE FORM

First Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
554 Main Street
Portland, CT 06480

I hereby give permission for the First Congregational Church of Portland, CT to use my name and photographic likeness in all forms of social media and communication to promote the ministry of the Church.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

If individual is under 18:

I, _____, am the parent/legal guardian of the individual named above.
I have read this release and approve of its terms.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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