



Gifford Park's Pride

Gifford Park Neighborhood: A Great Place to Live, Work, Learn and Play
www.giffordparkomaha.org

July / August 2010

A Publication of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association

Time Is Running Out!

The **Gifford Park Neighborhood Association** and **Destination Midtown** have spent the past few months distributing this summer's Neighborhood Survey and now it's coming to an end. On August 3rd, the survey will end and then Destination Midtown and UNO's School of Public Administration will spend time compiling the results.

You still have time to give us your opinions and there are plenty of places to pick up a survey to fill out if you haven't had a chance.....Here are a few of those places:

1. Fill out the survey that came with this month's GPNA Newsletter
2. Pick one up at the **Community Bike Shop, 525 N 33rd Street**. Blank surveys are under the sign that is on the building which say's "Survey Drop Box"
3. Go online <http://www.registration4u.com/formx.aspx?fID=2595> (or www.giffordparkomaha.org and click on the survey link)
4. Attend the **Ice Cream Social on Friday, July 30th, from 6-8 pm** in the Gifford Park Business District. Fill out a survey and you will receive one ticket for a free ice cream

So far we have received **81** returned surveys as of this printing but we should and hope to have more considering there are over 4,000 people who live in the neighborhood. Please encourage your friends, neighbors, and family to fill out this survey. This information and the ideas you tell us will be used to help implement future activities, projects, master plans, and fundraising. Gifford Park is a very unique neighborhood in many ways and to have this opportunity to voice an opinion is rare for most neighborhoods.

Please fill out a Neighborhood Survey and have a great summer!

Next General Meeting Thursday, August 12

Speaker: Joe Garcia
Fair Housing Center

7:00 P.M.

Creighton University
Medical Center
Morrison Seminar Room

Executive Meeting
Thursday, August 26
At the Flint's

A Message From The President

Hello Summer! The dog days of summer have definitely arrived. To celebrate summer and **National Night Out (Tuesday Aug 3rd)** the board is inviting members to a BBQ & Potluck in the Park. Members: please join us at the park shelter from **6:30-8:30**, the GPNA will provide the BBQ, members will provide food dishes for the potluck. If you are not a member and would like to attend, please join us; you can join our membership at the BBQ.

Reasons to attend the Gifford Park NNO:

- Hot BBQ
- Eclectic mix of side dishes to try
- Seeing neighbors who have been hiding inside with the AC on
- Celebrating Gifford Park and the neighborhood we love!!!

All of the above - PRICELESS!

by Dana-Carlton Flint

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* denotes new officer, board, or committee member

Lawn And Garden Or Garden Versus Lawn?

What does a gardener do when summer hits in the Midwest? What could possibly be construed as a reasonable activity when the temperatures edge towards the triple-digits?

Of course this is no time to do strenuous physical labor in the garden—that should be reserved for the cooler months. Well, when it is too hot to plant – plan! Omaha’s prime planting season is at least two months away, so why not take the opportunity in the summertime to plan and design future planting projects!

What? You say there is no more room to plant in your yard? One way to create room for more trees, shrubs, and flower beds in the landscape and to simultaneously simplify life is to get rid of some of that lawn! Author Alan Lacy addressed the issue of “The Lawn” in a Wall Street Journal article that is entitled “The On-Growing Crimes of Budding and Liebig” from August 20, 1982.

For some time I’ve been increasingly convinced that the world would be a better place for gardeners if Edwin Budding and Justus Liebig, two 19th century gentlemen with bright ideas, hadn’t let these ideas loose in public. Budding, an English engineer, invented the lawn mower, a device to keep grass short. Liebig, a German science professor, invented chemical fertilizer, a means to make it grow faster.

It only takes a moment to realize that these ideas are at odds. I am a firm believer that America believes that a lawnless life is not worth living. This is one of the most common and pervasive of all American suburban superstitions.

Is the lawn serving you, or are you serving the lawn? Do you need a lawn at all? If any of you have been to my home, you know my answer to that question.

The author, Lacy, goes on to explain that lawns are British in origin, and were found on the “estates of English landed gentry, and they were kept mown by cattle and sheep. The animals also provided fertilizer.” At least those early lawn mavens know the benefits of organic fertilizer.

A nice lawn is essential for a game of “Tag”, and there are the simple pleasures of simply rolling about on a nice cool lawn in summer. Also, I am a big fan of the smell of a freshly mown lawn. For these reasons a modest patch of lawn is worthwhile; however, all too often I heard from homeowners who are at the mercy of a lawn that is way too big for their needs. They are indeed serving “The Lawn”, simply because of an outmoded tradition or cultural habit. Especially, in Nebraska, it just makes sense (and cents!) to minimize the lawn. Instead, plant shrubs, trees, perennials, ornamental grasses – anything that doesn’t require that constant input of mowing, watering, fertilizing, mowing, aerating, disease control, mowing, watering, weeding, topdressing, and insect control.

continued on page 3

Editor's note: If you have something that would be of interest to our neighborhood, we encourage you to submit an article for our monthly newsletter. Editorials must be approved by the GPNA Executive Board. Articles can be mailed to P.O. Box 31462 Omaha, NE 68131; please include your name and phone number. Contact Sue Wilwerding (342-2795) or Chris Foster (342-6006).

Tell our advertisers you saw their ad in the Gifford Park's Pride!

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Garden Versus Lawn . . .

continued from page 2

Why does a lawn require so much constant input? Well, besides the distinct lack of cattle and sheep on our lawns to keep them cropped and fertilized, the other reason why our lawns require so much input is that monocultures do not exist in nature.

Therefore, those huge expanses of one species of plant only invite problems, such as diseases, insect pests, and compaction, because they are alien to the laws of nature. Any time we fight the laws of nature, we are bound to be in for an uphill battle, at best.

Therefore, why not sit down with a cool beverage and plan out how to turn just one patch of that lawn into a perennial garden, a butterfly and hummingbird garden, a shrub border, or a grove of trees for more shade? Once you have decided on a spot, now is the time to use the power of the summer sun to get rid of the lawn. There are two ways that organic gardeners can go about eliminative lawn or other patches of undesirable vegetation: using horticultural vinegar as an organic herbicide and/or solarization.

Horticultural vinegar is four times stronger than table vinegar. Spray it undiluted and watch the grass wither – always a fun option. The process of solarization takes at least a month. Cover your area with a clear plastic, and hold the edges down securing with soil, rocks, and the like. The plastic should be at least 4 mil thick, and this creates the “greenhouse effect”. The sun gets through the plastic and heats up the soil baking it, killing the grass.

Once the grass is gone, choose some of the native or well-adapted plants, bushes, and/or trees that tend to be more well-behaved. Don’t make the mistake of creating another monoculture; if one plant is attacked by a disease and/or insect, they are all likely to be attacked. Diversity is the name of the game.

There are numerous resources available to help us break our addiction to large lawns and, in turn, create a more diverse landscape. Our payoff in reducing the lawn is spending less time and money mowing and watering the lawn, and more time with family and friends, enjoying more butterflies, birds, and other wildlife in our home landscape.

May we all find ways to keep cool this month, discovering tranquility in our yard and neighborhood.

Enjoy!

*by Diane Kaye
Community Garden Director*

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You Have A Place To Call

Are you having problems with your landlord? Do you feel you’ve been discriminated against regarding housing? You have a place to call. The **Fair Housing Center of NE-IA**, a program of Family Housing Advisory Services, can help with your issues.

The Fair Housing Center tells people what their rights are when it comes to landlord-tenant issues. In addition, the Center does investigations and conducts trainings for the public. What is Fair Housing? Fair Housing is the right for all people to have safe decent housing and be able to get this housing without discrimination. City, state, and federal fair housing laws require that all people have an equal opportunity to buy, rent, or live in housing.

If you have questions about the meaning and application of the law, or questions on how to file a complaint, please contact the Fair Housing Center of NE-IA at **(402) 934-6675** or toll free at **(800) 669-3247** (800-NOW-FAIR). All of our services are free.

The Neighborhood Market Opens For The Season

The **Gifford Park Neighborhood Market** officially started on Friday evening, July 16th, in the business district with a season opener of 7 vendors. The evening was overcast, warm, and with a slight breeze, but it made for a great time to shop and visit with our neighborhood farmers and friends. Some of the farmers dispensed gardening advice along with recipes which made for a great start to the season. Vendors were selling their locally grown produce & flowers; we even had **The Community Bike Shop** set up a table to sell t-shirts. The produce encompassed everything from water-melons, green beans, all types of peppers, beets, various greens, basil, cilantro, to choke cherries. Our local farmers mentioned that soon we’ll be seeing tomatoes, cucumbers and squashes showing up at their stalls. If you’re out for a walk some Friday evening, stop on down to our little neighborhood market and see what’s been growing in Gifford Park.

by Martin Janousek

Another Summer of Youth Garden Fun . . . by Dana Freeman

Young gardeners, parents, and volunteers gathered at Gifford Park Community Garden on Saturday, May 22nd, for **Week 1** of Youth Garden (YG), “Get to Know Your Garden.” **Chris Foster** took new participants on a tour of the garden and pointed out shared spaces, family plots, rain barrels, and other garden features. Then new and returning YG participants created collaboratively a list of expected behaviors for adults and children to follow while first-time volunteer **Patty Falcone**, her daughter, and friend inscribed the dictation. These rules ensure everyone has fun and is safe at the garden. Each gardener painted a beautiful namestake to identify their plot and add vibrant color to the garden before discussing and selecting what fruits, vegetables, herbs, and flowers could be planted in their individual 30" x 30" raised garden boxes the following Saturday. Everyone painted a river rock to take home as a garden decoration. A special thanks to gardening veteran **Sue Freeman** for hosting a vegetable tasting so gardeners could sample their planting options.

Gardeners accomplished a lot during **Week 2**, “Plant Your Plot!” on Saturday, May 29th. Parents and volunteers helped children select a garden plot, claim it with their namestake, prepare the soil, and plant a variety of vegetable plants and seeds. Planting day at YG is a lot like organized chaos, and we are especially appreciative of experienced gardeners who take the time to mentor our newest green thumbs. Our take-home project arose from the guerrilla gardening movement—seed bombs are made by simply combining powdered clay, compost, seeds, and water, rolling the mixture into small balls, and allowing them to dry. Since they have everything they need to grow, these harmless grenades can be tossed into empty lots, lawns, or otherwise inhospitable landscapes in need of beautification and will sprout after a rainfall. Watch out for our growing army of gardeners in your midst!

A very, very special thank you to **Sue Freeman** for not only providing a fruit tasting snack but also growing hundreds of seedlings for our youth to plant, including tomatoes, peppers, tomatillos, gourds, and so much more. Neighborhood business **Indian Creek Nursery and Garden Center** (www.indiancreeknursery.com) also generously donated numerous flats of tomatoes to Gifford Park Community Garden (GPCG). Some were planted in the garden’s communal spaces while many were shared with other community gardens in the area. Three additional organizations provided Gifford Park Youth Garden with discounted seeds: Operation Green Plant from **America the Beautiful Fund** (www.america-the-beautiful.org), **High Mowing Organic Seeds** (www.highmowingseeds.com) in Wolcott, VT, and Herman’s Garden from **Seed Savers Exchange** (www.seedsavers.org) in Decorah, IA. Please consider supporting these charitable groups with your patronage.

For **Week 3** on Saturday, June 5th, it was too wet to plant our “Tepees, Tunnels, and Trellises.” However, **Mike Caban** helped gardeners make a trellis that would be planted with purple hyacinth beans, and **Stuart Shell** gathered the supplies and led the lashing and construction of the bean tepee, both of which would be planted the following week. We pulled weeds and prepped the plots for our food pantry plantings, and Teen Market Garden leader **Cynthia Shuck** monitored the salad garden planting take-home project. Recently printed YG t-shirts by **Art F/X Screen Printing and Embroidery** (www.artfxscreenprinting.com) were revealed and distributed. Thanks to YG grandparents **Judi & Raul Lopez** for the sandwich snack.

“L Is for Lepidoptera” was the letter and lesson of the day for **Week 4** on Saturday, June 12th. Lepidoptera is an order of insects that includes butterflies and moths. Dana College alumnus and Omaha’s Henry Doorly Zoo Butterfly & Insect Pavilion keeper **Tony Palmer** led an interactive lesson that encompassed the Milkweed Butterflies, Longwings, Snouts, Swallowtails, Brushfoots, Admirals, and Emperors of the garden. We are appreciative of the time Tony made in his schedule to visit our group and share many interesting factoids and his enthusiasm for these beautiful winged creatures.

Because of the rain delay the previous week, we had much catch-up work to do with the assistance of many adult hands - those of **Diane Kaye**, the **Stanleys**, **Mike Caban & Marcus Anderson**, **Bren Duvall**, **Daniel Lawse** and **Frankie Hamburger & Monica Meeks**. Seeds for pole beans, purple hyacinths, morning glories, sunflowers, broomcorn, and so much more were sown. Stop by and see how our hard work is paying off in vining, twining, and towering beauties! Finally, **Stuart Shell** and other volunteers helped gardeners construct their very own butterfly net to take home before enjoying a snack provided by new YG mom **Katrina Adams**. We are especially thankful to **Sue Freeman** for sewing each and every one of those nets. *If there is a tailor or seamstress in the neighborhood who would like to volunteer some time, we could always use help with net construction or repairs.* Kids love to catch butterflies, and nets are often torn in vigorous pursuit of an especially evasive specimen.

Thanks to all of our volunteers who make our program happen each and every week!



Ron Yates Loses Long Battle With Cancer

As many of you know former Gifford Park Neighborhood Association President **Ron Yates** passed away June 19, 2010, after a long battle with cancer; he was 68. Ron was born in Kansas City, Missouri, and later moved to Omaha where he raised a family, invested in numerous businesses, and was an influential leader for many years with the GPNA. Ron was one of the original founding fathers of the GPNA when it was formed back in 1988, and he was a big part of the early backbone that has allowed the GPNA and our neighborhood to remain strong.

On a personal note, Ron influenced me as much or more than anyone during the first 10-12 years of the GPNA. Ron served as president for two separate 2-year terms in the early and mid-1990's. As vice-president under Ron, I learned about leadership, thinking outside the box, and commitment to community service. Long after Ron was president I frequently sought his advice; even if I didn't agree with his opinion or didn't want to hear it, he made me think about all sides of an issue. He was always very supportive to my wife Sallie and me, especially with cleanups, tool lending and the community garden. Ron gave our neighborhood a tremendous amount of his time and effort - I found an old newsletter from July 1996 where Ron was recognized for logging 1,122 hours with the Watch Group!

Ron was great at challenging people to think deeper about important issues affecting our neighborhood. He made public safety a top priority and really understood "true" community policing concepts. Ron's work with creating and writing many "Neighbor of the Month" articles inspired camaraderie among neighbors (I invite you to go on-line - www.giffordparkomaha.org and read some of the archived newsletters - you will see how many things Ron was involved with). He believed the GPNA's role was to find solutions for neighbors needing help, and to put the neighborhood ahead of personal agendas.

I want to share with you an editorial from July 1990, written by Ron. At the time, I took his words as a personal challenge to step up my own volunteer efforts, I'm sure others did as well.

The Ravaging of the Gifford Park Neighborhood

For the last two years the quality of life in Gifford Park has deteriorated. The Gifford

Park area has, for many years, been used as housing for students and others in need of temporary housing. These individuals were sometimes troublesome with parties, parking and noise, however, they don't hold a candle to the element that we now have on 33rd/34th, Cass and Burt Streets. Many of the properties are owned by people or corporations that do not know or care about what is happening in our neighborhood. It has been suggested that some large institutions and speculators are hoping that those of us who care about the neighborhood will give up and move away. It appears the only work on property that we see in this area is usually mandated by Section 8 housing officials. A major project would be snow removal or lawn mowing.

We must insist that members of our community and those that rent to them be more responsible. If we all pull together we can turn this around. We must report all criminal activity (drinking on public streets and littering are crimes), and code violations (broken windows, sidewalks, junk cars, weeds and litter). If nothing is done it should be remembered that those who leave first get the best price for their homes. Will the last person leaving Gifford Park Neighborhood please turn out the lights?

On behalf of the GPNA we extend our deepest sympathy to the Yates family. Ron's volunteer spirit will continue to be alive in the Gifford Park neighborhood.

by Chris Foster



For another tribute to Ron Yates, see page 7

From A Teenage Gardener . . .

This is the second year of the Teen Market Garden. Things are going better than last year since no feral cat populations are involved.

The businesses are a bit different this year. Fruit Fly Farm, which specializes in different kinds of jam, but also grows melons and pumpkins, is thriving, thanks to the hard work of **Julian** and **Tiare Weak**. The Pepper People have a lot of peppers growing and hope for more. "Luckily the people who buy peppers are better paying customers than the neighborhood cats", says **Emma Kalkowski-Farrand**, smiling. The peppers seem to love Nebraska weather. Emma and **Elena Carlson** are very proud of their thriving business. Persephone and Co. are experiencing challenges, however. The flowers are thriving, but the herbs are dying. "I don't think herbs were meant for this kind of weather. Or maybe I just have a black thumb," says **Maureen Kalkowski-Farrand** sheepishly. Instead of relying on herbs, Maureen started to make vases. "They are complimentary to the flowers," says Maureen. **Ana Carlson** and Maureen are excited to have such unusual summer jobs.

"I think, over all, the garden is doing better than last year," says Emma, partner of The Pepper People. "Yes, last year we learned a lot of things. This year we are learning even more" chimes in her sister, Maureen, part of Persephone and Co. Everyone learned gardening was much harder than they thought it would be. "I like the conversations," says Julian. "Gardening is so much more fun with friends," says Ana. "It is nice to have someone to curse the weeds with," says Maureen. Emma says "It is nice to hang out with friends and learn about plants at the same time." Of course, each member learns responsibility and how to make business plans. They learn to price their products fairly and how to grow without chemicals. They also learn what products sell and what products do not. Hopefully, the members of Teen Market Garden will continue to learn and grow.

by Maureen Kalkowski-Farrand

P.S You can find the teen gardeners at two markets this summer: the Outdoor Market at Midtown Crossing on Saturday mornings, starting August 7 - September 4, 2010, from 9am- 12pm and the Gifford Park Neighborhood Market every Friday night through October 1, 2010, from 6pm- 8 pm in Gifford Park's 33rd and California street business district.



*We're looking for urban farmers, five-o'clock gardeners, and a couple local hucksters to set up tables and sell their locally grown produce, flowers, and wares at the Neighborhood Market. If you're interested in vending or would like more information, please contact **Cynthia Shuck** via email: giffordparkmarket@gmail.com or telephone 402-556-2090.*

Charles R. Kilgore Jr.
Attorney At Law
4913 Underwood Avenue
558-5000



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Cass Gas N Shop Liquor License Approved by NLCC

On June 9, GPNA members and other neighborhood opponents (**Mike Caban, Roger Freeman, Diane Kaye, Bob Hutton, Jerry Reimer, Margie Magnuson, Dave Schinzel, Darryl Hutton, Chris Foster**) testified in Lincoln before the **Nebraska Liquor Control Commission (NLCC)** to oppose the **Cass Gas N Shop** (at 33rd & Cass St.) liquor license application. The NLCC voted 2-1 to approve their license (**Bob Batt** and **Janice Wiebusch** voted to approve, **Robert Logsdon** voted to deny). Of note, in April the Omaha City Council voted 3-2 to deny the license, but since two council members were absent the result was "No Recommendation". For the record, the GPNA is opposed to this application because we believe additional alcohol outlets will have a negative impact on our neighborhood, and the neighborhood already has enough alcohol outlets. The GPNA will appeal the NLCC decision to the Lancaster County District Court. GPNA and other concerned neighborhood associations are working with AIC (Alcohol Impact Coalition) on a potentially much more effective liquor licensing strategy called LOCAL (Let Omaha Control its Alcohol Landscape)...stay tuned!

by Chris Foster

Save The Date!

The third annual fundraiser for the **Midtown Neighborhood Alliance (MNA)** will feature a masquerade ball theme with live music and food & drink from Midtown businesses. It will be held on **Friday, September 10th, 6 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.** at **Joslyn Castle**. Tickets are \$15. All proceeds go toward MNA's Re-Tree Initiative. To help with the event or to purchase tickets contact **Tom Craig** at **612-1444**.

An Important Traffic Note

According to Creighton University's **Lennis Pederson**, two interstate ramps will be closed starting **Sunday, July 25th, at 7 a.m.**: The 30th Street on-ramp to southbound I-480/US 75 and the off-ramp from southbound 480/US 75 to 30th Street. These closures are expected to last for several months.

Many of us have worked hard to have a beautiful lawn this year. Unfortunately, for some, the fastest growing grass can be found in the cracks of our sidewalks. If you want to rid yourself of this eyesore you can save some time and energy by pulling it out by hand following a rain or by spraying it. A great natural way to do this is to spray the offending grass or weed with household vinegar. Avoid applying before a rain. It may take several treatments but the results will speak for themselves.

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Closed Sunday



Remembering . . .

Each of us in our lifetime has occasions to remember certain points as we progress through stages of trials and tribulations. **Ron Yates**, a man of many wonders in my opinion, was one to be reckoned with. If you were talking to Ron and asked his personal opinion of a certain thing, you had better be sure you actually wanted his views, as that is exactly what you got.

In general conversation you might think Ron was not paying any attention to what was going on. Wrong as wrong could be; he was listening to the people, weighing their views, and then in his own sort of easy way came out with his view point. If you agreed with him fine; if not, he wanted to know why or how to change it. Ron was always positive in ways to improve our neighborhood and never too busy to help. One of the things I remember about Ron was when I would wear a t-shirt of mine that had the lay of the Current River located in Missouri on the back, never did he fail to have me stand with my back to him so he could talk and point out different things, especially how he loved that area. Now he is home.

by Robert Hutton

Yates School Update

On June 23, the GPNA met with OPS representatives **Thomas Harvey, Susan Higginson, and Eric Nelson** to discuss continuing program development plans for Yates School. Upcoming programs/classes include:

- four Pre-Kindergarten classes starting soon
- a "community" room available for use (i.e. cooking/ sewing/computer classes, meeting room, etc.)
- an on-site Family Resource Liaison

For more information, contact **Eric Nelson** (principal of Kellom Elementary School) at **344-0441** or Yates School at **344-7895**

Eric Nelson is also planning on meeting parents at both Yates and Kellom on a regular basis. "Coffee with the Principal" is an opportunity for parents to voice concerns and learn more about the programs underway at our neighborhood schools.



17th Annual Gifford Park Free Tennis Program

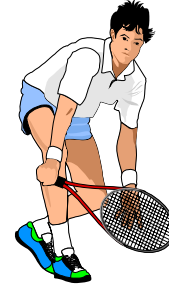


For: Youth (4 to 18 years old)

Dates: August 4, 11, 18, 25
(each Wednesday in August)

Where: Gifford Park Tennis Courts
(33rd & Cass St.)

Time: Ages 4 to 9 (6 - 6:45 p.m.)
Ages 10 to 18 (6:45 to 7:30 p.m.)



The Gifford Park Neighborhood Association is offering **FREE Tennis Lessons** and will provide tennis racquets, balls and instructors for each lesson. Parents and others are welcome to help.

To be enrolled, YOU MUST complete the form shown below and bring with you to the tennis lessons. Special prize for those who attend every lesson and demonstrate good sportsmanship. There is limited space available so please **be on time.** Call **342-6006** for more information.

Registration/Permission Form - Bring this form (completely filled out) with you to the tennis lessons to be enrolled.

Youth's Name: _____ Parent's Name: _____
 Street: _____ Street: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____ City, State, Zip: _____
 Age: _____ Date of Birth: _____ School: _____
 Parent/Guardian Phone: Home: _____ Work: _____

As the parent or legal guardian of the child named above, I hereby give my full consent and approval for my child to participate as a member of the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Youth Program.

I understand that there are certain risks of injury inherent in the practice and play of this sport, as well as related activities incidental to my child's participation, and I am willing to assume these risks on behalf of my child. I hereby certify that my child is fully capable of participating in this sport and that my child is healthy and has no physical or mental disabilities or infirmities that would restrict full participation in these activities, except as listed below.

I hereby waive, release and hold harmless the Gifford Park Neighborhood Association Youth Program, and the City of Omaha, Nebraska, its Officers, coaches, sponsors, supervisors and representatives for any injury that may be suffered by my child in the normal course of participation in this sport and the activities incidental thereto, whether the result of negligence or any other cause. Furthermore, I give consent to any necessary medical treatment in case of emergency.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____