

Torch Award Submission: **TA11-006**

- Full Title of Entry (80 char max): **Yom HaShoah – The Unity of Community**
- Entry Category (You can select up to 2, although you will only win in one):
 - Men's Club Shabbat / Ritual Literacy
 - Yom HaShoah / Yellow Candle
 - Israel / Masorti
 - Hebrew Literacy
 - Hearing Men's Voices Young Men (21-40)
 - Men's Health
 - Youth Programming
 - Programs for
 - World Wide Wrap Program
 - Shomrei Ha'aretz
 - Club Administration
 - Non-FJMC
 - Best Overall Programming* [*Best Overall Programming is not on the basis of a single program, but your club's entire year. A single program submitted in this category will be re-categorized.]
 - I'm not sure, so please select for our club's submission.
- Contact Person: **Steve Dix**
- Email address for Contact Person: **dixes@yahoo.com**
- Club number & Club name: **Etz Chaim/#1711 formally known as the Congregation Etz Chaim Men's Club**
[Is it a Men's Club or a Brotherhood? Please specify]
- Number of club members: **144**
- Synagogue name, city and state: **Congregation Etz Chaim – Marietta, Georgia**
- Club President name (at time of entry): **Barry Riesenber**
- Club President name (at time of convention): **Barry Riesenber**
- Person preparing entry: **Steve Dix**
- Email address of person preparing: **dixes@yahoo.com**

Part II. Summary Information (2 – 3 sentences):

On April 10, 2010 the Men's Club of Congregation Etz Chaim held a candlelight vigil in observance of Yom HaShoah. 365 Yellow Candles were lit in the shul's Holocaust Memorial Garden by nearly 150 attendees, and members of the Men's Club remained throughout the night to guard the burning candles and remember the eleven million dead. But this night was only the culmination of a several week long project of rejuvenation of the Holocaust Memorial Garden, youth awareness, and community outreach to encourage remembrance of the Holocaust by all faiths

Part III. By submitting this document, I certify, on behalf of the club, that this submission has not been submitted by our club for a Torch Award in a previous year.

Part IV. Entry Documentation

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Our submission narrative begins on the following page.

Yom HaShoah – The Unity of Community

In the fall of 2009 as the board of the Etz Chaim Men's Club contemplated its programs for the spring of 2010 we revisited our participation in the Yellow Candle Program. Etz Chaim had actively participated in the program since its inception, but as the years went by the congregation's enthusiasm had waned to the point that in 2009, we decided to forgo participation. As anticipated by the board, the congregation did not miss the candles until they were gone, and there was a great deal of complaining that the candles were not available for Yom HaShoah 2009. This led us to having the opportunity to reinvigorate the program rather than just doing the same old mail out of the candles and hoping that we would receive enough in donations to cover our out-of-pocket costs.

One of our brand new board members, Michael Zimmerman, suggested that we have a mass candle lighting on Yom HaShoah and invite the congregation to come and light their candles along with their fellow members. Of course, because no good deed goes unpunished, we immediately placed Michael in charge of the project for 2010. He enthusiastically pursued the assignment, put together a committee, and the plan was underway.

As the days went by the committee settled on some key points they wanted to highlight in the program:

- The Holocaust took 6 million Jews but it also took another 5 million of other faiths for numerous reasons
- We not only lost all those who perished, but we also lost all that those who perished might have accomplished
- The Holocaust came to an end 65 years ago, but genocide did not die with the Holocaust
- The victims of the Holocaust extend far beyond those who died in the camps and those who survived the horror; their children and grandchildren have been profoundly affected by the experience of those who died in the camps and those who lived to tell the story
- In addition to the more commonly considered victims, others were profoundly impacted by the Holocaust, not the least of whom were the camp liberators
- In order for the Holocaust to have relevance in the 21st century, we as Jews must make all the community, not just the Jewish community, aware of the meaning of the elimination of 11 million lives for no reason other than their faith, their political views, their mental or physical infirmities, their sexual orientation or their nationality

With all of this in mind, the committee set out with a most ambitious agenda. Because the contemplated program was clearly going to involve the expenditure of funds not normally associated with the Yellow Candle program as previously undertaken, it was quickly decided that we would not mail out the candles and thus saved significant money on postage.

Etz Chaim has a beautiful Holocaust Memorial Garden that had been donated to the shul in 1996, but because of a variety of reasons it had fallen into disrepair. Given that the candle lighting was to be held in the garden, the first benefit to the shul from the Yellow Candle program was going to be improvements to the garden. Through a combination of donations, sweat equity from some of our members and the enthusiastic support of our seventh grade Hebrew School class, the garden was cleaned up, its central column and Memorial Candle holder were repainted, and new

landscaping was installed, including a beautiful yet poignant Mogen David planted in yellow flowers.

A brochure was developed advertising the program that emphasized the need to recall the sacrifice and suffering of all of the victims of the Holocaust. By calling out the 5 million of other faiths who suffered, we were able to reach out to the non-Jewish community, and what we found was a profound interest in participating in the program.

The Catholic Church of St. Ann is located about 3 miles from Congregation Etz Chaim. In hopes that we might get some participation from members of that parish, we visited with Father Ray Cadran, who heads its adult and youth education programs. We had also hoped that there might be members of the parish who had served as liberators or were the children of liberators of the camps. We were astonished to find that Father Ray, himself, was the son of such a person. His father had been in the United States Army and had been involved in the liberation of at least two camps in Germany. As Father Ray told his father's story, he added that his father's experience had in large measure led to his own decision to enter the priesthood. We asked if Father Ray would speak briefly at the program. He said he would be honored to do so, but what could he possibly have to tell us that was of any interest? To say that Father Ray is a humble man is a bit of an understatement. It should be noted that not only did Father Ray speak at the event, but he brought much of the crowd to tears with his beautifully told story. His participation also led to his heading up a Holocaust Remembrance program for his Teen Life group at the Church during the week of Yom HaShoah. His participation has forged a bond between Etz Chaim and St. Ann's, and we continue to pursue programs of mutual interest with them.

Not being willing to rest with Father Ray's story, we sought out other speakers who had been involved in the liberation of the camps, and we were most fortunate to meet Dr. Mort Waitzman, a Professor-Emeritus at Emory University, who had been present for the liberation of the Mittel Bau – Dora camp. Camp Dora, as it was known, was a slave labor camp associated with a V-2 missile building facility in Germany. Dr. Weitzman related the amazing story of the liberation of the camp immediately prior to Pesach. With the shortest of time to prepare, the soldiers were able to help the inmates hold their first Seder since the horrors of their incarceration began. . . in the home of the notorious Joseph Goebbels! Needless to say, Dr. Waitzman's participation in the program was essential.

To represent the survivors, rather than have a speaker describe the horrors of the times (our sense being that we had all heard the story from the inmates perspective time and again, and we wanted to emphasize other aspects of the impact of the Holocaust) we invited one of our congregants, Mr. Sam Silbiger, to light a Memorial Candle immediately prior to the lighting of the Yellow Candles. Mr. Silbiger is a native of Oświęcim, Poland, the town next to the Auschwitz complex. He was held in concentration camps during the war, entered Israel on the *Altalena*, fought in the War of Independence, and ultimately ended up with us in Marietta, Georgia. His presence speaks more profoundly than most words could ever express.

As the program date approached we had significant contact with our Religious School, and invited several of the students to provide readings to us, including applicable poetry and an excerpt from the Diary of Anne Frank. We also invited all of the members of the shul to provide us with the names of their family members who perished in the Holocaust.

Having now fleshed out the program, we went about the business of publicizing the event in the area. Copies of the brochure were provided to every member of the congregation and were

placed in the windows of every neighborhood business that would allow us to post them. Posters were placed in the lobby at St. Anne's and brochures were distributed there as well. Additional outreach was made to local Baptist, Lutheran, and Methodist churches, and while the church leadership did not actively participate in the presentation of the program, the event drew several people from those churches.

The day of the program we set up a multi-tiered station to hold 365 of the Yellow Candles. Additional candles were available for congregants to take home and light if they so chose.

A copy of the program is attached. From Havdallah to the completion of the program took about an hour and a half. As the crowd swelled to well over one hundred by 8:45 PM we knew that we had touched something very special in the community. And as the program itself unfolded it was clear that we did not disappoint them or ourselves. After the opening remarks, lighting of the Memorial Candle, and speeches by Dr. Waitzman and Father Ray, the lighting of the candles began. As that process unfolded the names of the victims we had obtained from our congregants were read out – and nearly 150 of our congregants and members from various churches within our community stepped forward to remember.

Following the candle ceremony, members of the Men's Club stayed throughout the night to keep an eye on the candles, engage in some serious conversation, and watch Holocaust related movies. As the morning arrived, we went into the minyan chapel and held morning services, concluding the program.

All said, this program generated more discussion in Etz Chaim than anything the Men's Club had done in many years. We are all immensely proud of its outcome. And we are immensely proud that we could, through the Yellow Candle Program and Yom HaShoah, demonstrate the **Unity of Community**.

Associated documentation and a few photographs of the event are attached, beginning on the following page.

Brochure – Front Page

זכור
"We Remember"
 Yom HaShoah
 Holocaust Remembrance Day
Yellow Candle™ Program

Founded 1911
 Congregation Etz Chaim
 Creating Meaningful Jewish Experiences!
 MEN'S CLUB

Congregation Etz Chaim will observe Yom Hashoah with a community candle-lighting and all-night vigil at the Synagogue's Holocaust Memorial Garden, located at 1190 Indian Hills Parkway, Marietta, GA 30068, beginning at 9:00 PM on April 10, 2010.

Yom HaShoah, **Holocaust Remembrance Day**, commemorates the lives and heroism of the Six Million Jews and Five Million others of all faiths who died between 1933 and 1945.

To survivors, the Holocaust remains real and ever-present, but to others, it seems part of ancient history.

It is our sacred responsibility to insure that the Holocaust will not be forgotten in this and future generations.

Please join us on **Saturday night, April 10, at 9:00** for a candle-lighting ceremony in the Holocaust Memorial Garden at the Synagogue. Members of Etz Chaim and other local religious institutions, the Jewish community, and anyone wanting to remember all those who were lost are invited to attend, and every person is invited to light a Yellow Candle. Following the ceremony the Men's Club will conduct an overnight vigil concluding with morning services.

See Side Two

Brochure – Back Page

זכור
"We Remember"
 Yom HaShoah - Holocaust Remembrance Day

Your contribution to the Yom HaShoah Yellow Candle program will help assure that the memory of the victims of the Holocaust will live on and not disappear into the winds of time.

Enclosed is my donation for the **Yom HaShoah Remembrance Day Program**

\$18.00 ___ \$36.00 ___ \$72.00 ___ Other \$ ___

Please make checks payable to **Congregation Etz Chaim Men's Club** and mail to:

Congregation Etz Chaim
 Attn: Yom HaShoah Program
 1190 Indian Hills Parkway
 Marietta, GA 30068

Or pay by **PayPal** by going to www.etzchaim.net
 Scroll down to the Yom HaShoah button and click on donate.

Name: _____ Phone: _____
 Address: _____ Email: _____

A limited number of Yellow Candles will be available for those wishing to light one at home.

Please provide the names of loved ones who were victims of the Holocaust. These names will receive special recognition during the vigil and will be placed on a Yom HaShoah scroll near the Memorial Garden.

English Name: _____
 Hebrew Name, if known: _____

English Name: _____
 Hebrew Name, if known: _____

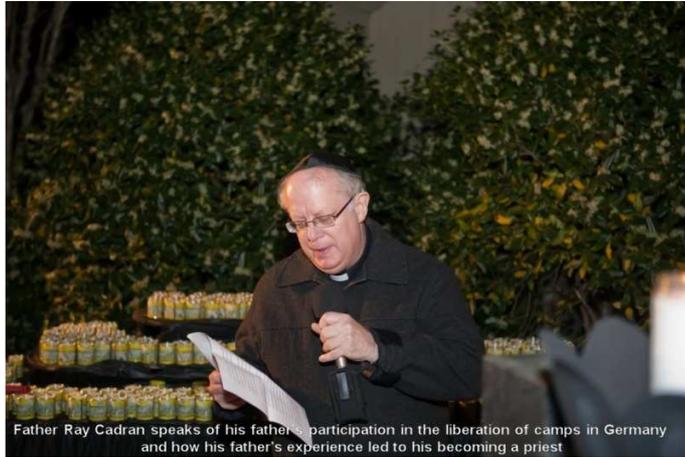
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Yom HaShoah Program April 10, 2010		
8:55	Havdallah	Rabbi Paul Kerbel
9:00	Introduction	Steve Dix
9:02	Light "Torch" Candle	Sam Silbiger
9:04	1 st Speaker	Dr. Mort Waitzman
9:15	Light initial row of candles "Hatikvah" in background Reading of provided names of victims	Men's Club Members
9:22	2 nd Speaker	Father Ray Cadran
9:30	Light next row of candles "Hatikvah" in background Reading of provided names of victims	Guests
	Reading from Ann Frank Diary	Gabrielle Cohen
	Reading from "The Last Butterfly"	Benjamin Nadolne
9:40	Light next row of candles "Hatikvah" in background Reading of provided names of victims	Guests
	Place stones on site El Malei Rachamim Reading of provided names of victims Kaddish	Guests Rabbi Shalom Lewis

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