

2009 Revamped Yellow Candle
Program Successful at Congregation
Beth Emeth

FJMC Torch Award Entry

Submitted by Club No. 1144, Men's Club of
Congregation Beth Emeth, Herndon, VA

1. Identification Information.....	1
2. Summary Information.....	1
3. Self Assessment of Entry.....	2
History	2
Synergistic Religious School Programming.....	2
Embedding the Program in the Religious School Curriculum.....	3
Awareness Campaign and Advanced Planning	3
APPENDIX - Artifacts	A-1
Institutionalizing the Program.....	A-1
Awareness Campaign	A-2
Items Accompanying the Package	A-3

1. Identification Information

- ▶ Submission Identifier Code: **TA09049**
- ▶ Full Title for Entry (80 characters maximum): **2009 Revamped Yellow Candle Program Successful at Congregation Beth Emeth**
- ▶ Entry Category: **FJMC Programs**
- ▶ Contact Person to be listed on Torch Award CD: **Jim Sloan**
- ▶ Email address to be listed on Torch Award CD: **jsloansarel@gmail.com**
- ▶ Club number & Club name: **Club Number 1144, Men’s Club of Congregation Beth Emeth**
- ▶ Number of club members: **32**
- ▶ Synagogue name, city and state: **Congregation Beth Emeth, Herndon, VA**
- ▶ Club President name (at time of entry): **Craig Dubois**
- ▶ Club President name (at time of convention): **Dave Hillelsohn**
- ▶ Person preparing entry: **Gary Smith**
- ▶ Email address of person preparing entry: **elegantsolutions@netscape.net**
- ▶ Date of entry submission: **April 5, 2009**

2. Summary Information

CBE Men's Club teamed up with the Religious School to implement a program that closely follows the FJMC Yom HaShoah Yellow Candle™ Program. CBE Men’s Club has taken the additional step of working with the religious school to institutionalize the program into the religious school curriculum. The program was revamped several years ago, and most of the hands-on work of assembling the packages are done by seventh grade students in the religious school. The up front costs are covered 100% by a congregational sponsor.

3. Self Assessment of Entry

What makes our implementation of the FJMC Yellow Candle program unique at Beth Emeth, and what makes it worthy of a Torch Award, is that we have worked with the Religious School to make an integral part of their curriculum; that the Seventh grade students actually perform the vast majority of the task of assembling packages; and that it has changed from a college student targeted program to a congregation wide program that helps the entire congregation commemorate this observance.

We’ve attached artifacts related to pre-event and ongoing planning and the awareness campaign. The sections below talk to the achievement of program goals, awareness, and advanced planning. We first talk to the history of the program at Beth Emeth.

History

The history of this program at Beth Emeth is that it was faithfully performed for many, many years as a free package sent to our teen students at college. The Men’s Club re-evaluated the program and solicited feedback to determine effectiveness about five years ago. We found that many dorm rooms had rules prohibiting the lighting of candles; the vast majority of college students it was shipped to were not engaged by the package and accompanying materials, and a targeted feedback campaign revealed no interest.

After a one year hiatus, the program was retooled and restarted by one of our members (later to become Synagogue President) whose father is a holocaust survivor. Marty Zelman, who is the Yom HaShoah Program Coordinator for the synagogue, decided that the new focus should be to send a candle to every congregant. This proved to be an effective change, with dramatically increased feedback (about 33% of the congregation, or roughly 150 family units – an unheard of response rate) since the program was retooled. The 2009 campaign, now in progress, is the third year that the Men’s Club has used this format.

An accompanying letter, based loosely on the model letter from the FJMC program guide for 2009, “FJMC Yellow Candle™ Program: Branching out and reaching out” asks for a donation to cover the cost of the candles. The letter states “Net proceeds received from the Yom HaShoah Candle Program will be used to fund Holocaust and other related programming and study in both the religious school and the synagogue.”

Synergistic Religious School Programming

Marty Zelman works with the seventh grade religious school class and its teacher Ita Mandel (whose father is also a holocaust survivor) to talk to the students about the Shoah.

A movie directly related to the holocaust is shown and the **same seventh graders assemble the boxes, insert the prayer and donation letter, and put the address labels on the boxes** to get them ready for bulk mailing.

The Men's club then sorts out the candles by zip code and mails them.

Embedding the Program in the Religious School Curriculum

One of the benefits of working with the Religious School has been that our partnership with the religious school has become embedded in the curriculum for the Seventh Grade. Our seventh grade students learn valuable information, and are also introduced to the idea that activities at the synagogue are not about segregating one group's activities, but rather are about partnerships and synergy.

Third, we are able to present a substantial contribution to the religious school every year for holocaust and other related programming. About 33% of congregants do contribute and very generously. This is important as time goes on and our survivors are leaving us. It is important to keep reminding people so we never forget the six million that perished, Le Dor Va Dor, from generation to generation, and this story and its lessons have to be passed on forever. The implementation of the Yellow Candle program at Beth Emeth is helping us to do that in our generation, at our synagogue.

Awareness Campaign and Advanced Planning

Pre-event and ongoing awareness was created through

- ▶ email notices sent from the Men's Club's congregational list serve;
- ▶ through a letter that accompanied the package;
- ▶ through notices in the congregational newsletter, the “Shofar,” and by
- ▶ announcements from the bimah.

The FJMC Yellow Candle Program was actually **made part of the Seventh Grade religious school curriculum goals** as part of the Holidays Component for Academic Year 2008-09/5769. This was a result of years of ad hoc partnering with the religious school.

This joint program **enhances the image of the FJMC, the region, and our club** to the youngsters in the religious school and to congregational members. When activities cross over the boundaries of the club itself, and position its visibility to young people, Men's Club provides a forward path to the young people that will grow up to be potential members of the synagogue as adults.

More importantly, it models that their participation in synagogue can be synergistic and need not partition them off into one group or another. It **emphasizes that the Men's**

Club is part of the core essential elements of synagogue life, rather than an optional club.

Between five and ten club members participated in pre-event planning and day-of-event activities. The club has about 32 members. The congregation has about 460 member families of record.

Related Torch Award Program Winners

A search of the archive (Ref.:

<http://www.fjmc.org/Files/TorchAwardFiles/TorchAwardHist-HolocaustRemembrance.pdf>) revealed similarities between Beth Emeth’s submission

and a 2001 submission from Beth Tikvah, Green Acres, FL, which won a Silver award in the category of Holocaust Remembrance/Yom Hashoah Yellow Candle Program.

Instead of performing their activities at their synagogue, as Beth Emeth chose to do, the Beth Tikvah Men’s Club organized a program to bring the story of the Holocaust to the children of Osceola Middle School in Okeechobee, FL. Four speakers rotated through four class sessions and presented their experiences to the 8th grade. Time for questions and answers was scheduled in each session. The contact for that entry was Israel Sack, (561) 968-4755, nanapapa61@msn.com.

APPENDIX - Artifacts***Institutionalizing the Program***

Seventh Grade
Curriculum Goals – Academic Year 2008-09 / 5769

GRADE LEVEL THEME: Sixth/Seventh Grades
Our History (decisions made in the past affect the present: applies to both *Am Yisrael* and our individual families).

HOLIDAYS
Rosh Hashanah * Yom Kippur * Sukkot * Simchat Torah * Chanukah * Tu B'Shevat * Purim * Pesach * Lag B'Omer * Yom Ha'Atzmaut * Yom HaShoah * Shavuot * Rosh Chodesh * Shabbat. They will be able to identify symbols, rituals and customs associated with each. They will also be able to identify how the

5. Seders from Scratch
6. Yom Ha'Atzmaut celebration – 9th graders will plan classroom activities
7. Yom HaShoah - historical events leading up and during Holocaust and World War II, major occurrences related to the Shoah, mitzvah of Kavod HaMayit (respect for the dead). Students will lead the Yom HaShoah/Yom HaZikaron/Yom HaAtzmaut assembly for grades 7-6.
8. Along with Men's Club, students will participate in the Yellow Candle project, providing candles to congregational families.
9. Shavuot – Guest speaker to talk about his/her decision to convert.

Shabbat: Students experience Shabbat in the main sanctuary, and have special Shabbat services with residents of the Jewish Group Homes. They will continue to learn about the structure of the Shabbat service,

Parent Curriculum Guide: Kindergarten – Grade 7 Page 23 of 25

Excerpt From 2009 Beth Emeth Parent Curriculum Guide

The Men's Club Yellow Candle project is now embedded in the religious school's curriculum goals for seventh grade students.

Awareness Campaign

CBE Men's Club

Jim Sloan

March was a busy month for the Men's Club. We held our World Famous Purim Carnival, there was a terrific turnout and everyone had a great time. We would like to thank Larry Kaplan who managed the kitchen and staff, Dennis Staten who arranged for the games and moon bounce, Jim Sloan and Steve Greene who managed pre- and same day ticket sales, Samantha Brown for organizing the crafts for the BECCers and Dan Langer who managed the kids on the games. In particular, we would like to thank USY'er Mathew Barkan for organizing all the kids and stepping up to a big challenge in keeping everything running smoothly. Working with Dan, he made sure that everyone had their breaks and meals. A future Purim Carnival organizer, perhaps? Also, thanks to the many volunteers, adults and kids, who came and made the carnival a success. Their participation makes it easy to run the whole show. And thanks to Sisterhood and BECC for their continued support in putting on this event. It is truly a team effort.

MEN'S CLUB CALENDAR

Monday, March 30, 7:30 PM: Men's Club Meeting (new date - was April 6)

Sunday, May 3: 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament

is very important as I was reminded this winter when I visited the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, Yad Vashem. Thank you to Marty Zelman for all the support he continues to give Beth Emeth and the Men's Club for this wonderful program, Ita Mandel and her Seventh Grade Class for getting the candles ready to mail out and to those in the Men's Club who sorted them into the proper bags for mailing.

Yellow Candles

At the end of March the Men's Club mailed out the Yellow Candles for Yom HaShoah in remembrance of the Holocaust. The generous donations that you make as a result go directly to our Religious School to help fund Holocaust educational programs. We think this

New Board

In May we will be electing a new Men's Club board for 2009-10. If you are interested in taking a position please let us know. We welcome new participants to take an active role and make the Men's Club your club. And as always, our meetings are on the 1st Monday of the month, refreshments are served, and all are welcomed.

The pre-event awareness campaign included announcements by email and articles in the Congregation Beth Emeth monthly newsletter, the Shofar.

Items Accompanying the Package

**Yom HaShoah Meditation
The Blessing of the Yellow Candle
Evening of Monday April 20th, 2009**

As I light this Yellow Candle, I vow never to forget the lives of the Jewish men, women, and children who are symbolized by this flame. They were tortured and brutalized by human beings who acted like beasts; their lives were taken in cruelty. May we be inspired to learn more about our six million brothers and sisters as individuals and as communities and to recall their memories throughout the year. May we recall not only the terror of their deaths, but also the splendor of their lives. May the memory of their lives inspire us to hallow our own lives and to live meaningful Jewish lives so that we may help to insure that part of who they were shall endure always.

Rabbi Jules Harlow



Meditation Letter Accompanying the Package

The meditation text was taken from the FJMC Program Guide. The logo is from a sculpture near our bima.



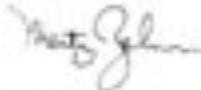
Dear Fellow Congregants,

Please accept this Yom HaShoah Yahrzeit Candle with compliments from the Congregation Beth Emeth (CBE) Men's Club. We ask that you join us on the evening of Monday, April 20, 2009, erev Yom HaShoah, by lighting the Yellow Candle and reciting the enclosed meditation. As part of the worldwide Jewish community, it is our collective obligation to honor and remember the Six Million who perished in the Holocaust.

Thank you to those volunteering their time to help pack and mail candles. You are truly appreciated.

If you would like, please use the enclosed envelope to return a contribution to the CBE Men's Club Yom HaShoah Program to support this effort. Through your generosity, we will continue to purchase and mail candles each and every year. Net proceeds received from the Yom HaShoah Candle Program will be used to fund Holocaust and other related programming and study in both the religious school and the synagogue.

Sincerely,



Marty Zeiman
Yom HaShoah Program Coordinator

Enclosed is my tzedakah donation to the CBE Men's Club. Please make checks payable to CBE Men's Club

_____ \$10 _____ \$18 _____ \$25 _____ \$36 _____ \$54 _____ \$72 Other _____

Name _____

CONGREGATION BETH EMETH
12523 LAWYERS ROAD
HERNDON, VIRGINIA 20171
(703) 860-4215 • Fax: (703) 860-5847
www.bethemeth.org

Tzedakah Donation Letter Accompanying Package
The letter was adapted from the FJMC Program Guide.

APPENDIX

Torch Award Application No. TA09049
“2009 Revamped Yellow Candle Program Successful”
Congregation Beth Emeth, Herndon, VA



The package was accompanied by a simple envelope in which to return the response letter.

A decision was made to keep it very simple and clean, and to avoid the appearance of unnecessarily strong a solicitation, to not to include postage on the envelope. About 150 out of 460 member family units generously responded last year.