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Torch Award entry from Club 1111, Beth Israel, Owings Mills, MD.

Entry Title-World Wide Wrap Program--2007

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Submitted by paper

**TORCH AWARD ENTRY**  
**ENTRY ID 140**  
**2007 WORLD WIDE WRAP**

**Beth Israel Brotherhood has participated in all of the previous World Wide Wraps. In prior years, we always hosted a breakfast for the participants and the program usually consisted of either watching the FJMC video, "The Ties That Bind" or having a talk by the rabbi or another knowledgeable person about the mitzvah of putting on tefillin. This year, we were presented with a wonderful opportunity to bring the Wrap to a new level. The Presidents of our Sisterhood and Brotherhood received an email message from our USY Youth Director, Andrew Halpern, several weeks prior to the Wrap date (February 4, 2007). Andrew reminded them that the first weekend in February, 2007, was Claire Sodden weekend at Beth Israel and he was requesting that the Sisterhood and Brotherhood provide some assistance to our USY chapter by providing meals and other financial help. At this point, some explanation of the Claire Sodden Memorial weekend is in order. Claire was a USY President of Beth Israel Congregation almost 40 years ago. After graduating high school and entering college, she developed a type of cancer which usually only occurs in adults. She died shortly afterwards and our USY Chapter has held a weekend dedicated to her memory for many years. They invite other chapters from within and outside of our region to participate in a weekend of study, ruach and fun. The Sisterhood agreed to provide a luncheon to the 75 USY participants after the Shabbat service. Since the wife of FJMC Honorary President, Danny Stern, is the Beth Israel Sisterhood Co-President, he was aware of the email from Andrew Halpern and he came up with a plan of how the Brotherhood could help the USYers while concurrently enhancing the observance of the World Wide Wrap.**

**Danny had a brief meeting with Andrew Halpern at a Kiddush after Shabbat services. Danny asked Andrew if the USYers would be interested in participating in the World Wide Wrap. Andrew thought that it was a great idea since many of the USY teens had never been to an FJMC Wrap. Andrew said that on Sunday morning of the Claire Sodden Weekend, the USYers usually rotated among several stations to learn about different Jewish observances and practices. The two of them decided that one of the stations would be devoted to tefillin. Danny then spoke to Brotherhood President, Lee Kirsh. They decided that it**

was appropriate for the Brotherhood to host the 75 teenagers at a gourmet breakfast after the Wrap. Danny and Lee then contacted former Club President and Brotherhood Chef, Marvin Mervis, to plan the breakfast. The next step was for Danny to consult with our two rabbis, Jay Goldstein and Joshua Neely, about the tefillin program. The three of them decided that Danny should conduct the program with suggestions about the content provided by the two rabbis. Rabbi Goldstein pointed out that many of the USYers were Hebrew Day School students who regularly put on tefillin and that to challenge them; the program would have to be more sophisticated.

Several days before the Wrap date, Danny went to the synagogue chapel and took two sets of tefillin that were old and no longer kosher. Rabbi Goldstein had suggested that he do this. Danny took the tefillin home and carefully opened the black boxes that contain the four Torah passages in the "rosh" and "yad" tefillin. He then collected a variety of materials from various sources to present the material and develop questions that possibly could stump the teens. At this point, everything was ready for the weekend.

It was decided that the morning minyan should be held in the synagogue sanctuary rather than the chapel because of the large crowd that was expected. The attendance at the Wrap was well over 100, the largest attendance that we have ever had at a Beth Israel Wrap. The two pictures at Attachment 1 show part of the crowd that attended the services. The only problem that occurred that morning related to the person who was scheduled to lead services. Danny told Andrew that it would be nice if a USYer could lead services. Andrew selected someone but the person he chose partied late the night before and overslept. He arrived after the services had started. Part time Ritual Director and Brotherhood Board Member, Mayer Zimmerman, conducted the services. Andrew Halpern had a special surprise for those in attendance at the minyan. Andrew is an accomplished guitarist and he provided musical accompaniment to the service. Assisting him was the Assistant Regional USY Director from the Seaboard Region. They played traditional tunes, modern tunes, Carlebach music and added a lot of ruach to the service. See the two pictures at Attachment 2 with the leaders of the service.

**After the service, the Brotherhood hosted the breakfast as promised. Marvin prepared French toast, waffles and some delicious desserts for the Wrap participants. In Attachment 3, Brotherhood Board Members can be seen serving the goodies to the USY participants.**

**After finishing breakfast and singing a spirited "birchat", the teens were divided into three groups of 25 each. The USYers spent 20 minutes at each mitzvah station so that each teen would visit all three stations within an hour. The tefillin station was led by FJMC Honorary President, Danny Stern, a Past President of Beth Israel Brotherhood and this years World Wide Wrap Program Chair. Using the two sets of tefillin that he had dissected, Danny explained the contents of the tefillin and how the mitzvah was observed. He also posed several difficult questions to the USY group but they were up to the challenge. He was only able to stump them one or two times. One question asked where the oldest set of tefillin was found. The answer is in the cave at Qumran, site of the Dead Sea Scrolls. No one correctly answered this question. Another question that stumped the students dealt with a Chinese Journal which pointed out that the straps and boxes of the tefillin were located by the pressure points on the arm and head. These points are used for acupunctures. Other than that, the kids knew the answers to several difficult questions. See Attachment 4 which shows Danny presenting the tefillin program to a group of USYers.**

**This was by far the most successful World Wide Wrap that our club ever had. In addition to the large attendance, we were able to actively involve the youth of our congregation and some other congregations in a very moving service and program. Hopefully, this will just be the beginning for some of the USYers and they will participate in future Wraps at our synagogue or other synagogues.**

**The Brotherhood day did not end with the conclusion of the Wrap. Since the World Wide Wrap is held on Super Bowl Sunday, our Brotherhood invited everyone to return to the synagogue in the evening for a Super Bowl party. A large screen was installed to watch the game and Chef Marvin Mervis put in a double shift for the day by baking homemade pizza and special desserts in addition to the pretzels, potato chips, soft drinks and regular fare. This will be a day that will remain in the memories of our Brotherhood members for many years to come.**

**USY KIDS AND CONGREGANTS AT MINYAN**



**USY LEADERS ACCOMPANY SERVICES**



**BETH ISRAEL BROTHERHOOD MEMBERS SERVE BREAKFAST**



**USYers LEARN ABOUT THE MITZVAH OF TEFILLIN**

