

Torch Award Submission: TA09-119

- Full Title of Entry (80 char max): To Life!
 - Entry Category: _ Men's Health Programs
 - Contact Person to be listed on Torch Award CD: _ Paul Davidson
 - Email address to be listed on Torch Award CD: _ Rachexdad@aol.com
 - Club number & Club name: _ #738 Brotherhood of Temple Israel, Sharon, MA
- [Is it a Men's Club or a Brotherhood?]
- Number of club members: _ 150
 - Synagogue name, city and state: _ Temple Israel, Sharon, MA
 - Club President name (at time of entry): _ Paul Davidson
 - Club President name (at time of convention): _ Paul Davidson
 - Person preparing entry: _ Paul Davidson
 - Email address of person preparing: _ Rachexdad@aol.com

Part II. Summary Information (up to 200 words):

“To Life!” Is the title for the overall health and wellness programming for the Temple Israel Brotherhood. In response to Bob Braitman's outgoing presidential speech at the 2007 convention, we created programs to promote increased physical activity in our club. As a result, we have fielded a Brotherhood softball team as part of a Jewish Softball League through the summer, sponsored a golf tournament, F1 car racing, regular bike rides from the Spring through Fall, and “Tennis on Tuesdays” throughout the Fall and Spring. These programs have engaged a broad range of participants and have been especially attractive to younger members. Each of the sporting activities has enlisted some of the same individuals, but there has been surprisingly little overlap. The net result has been a series of physical activities that have appealed to the needs of the different constituent groups within our Brotherhood, as well as drawing in new members. All told, approximately one half of our 150 members have participated in one or more of these ongoing activities, which promote fun, health, and camaraderie.

Part III. Self Assessment of Entry:

1. Explain presentation and documentation completeness –

To encourage increased awareness of health as a Jewish value, we developed a comprehensive strategy to engage as many members and nonmembers as possible in physical activity. Using the name of “To Life!” we set up an umbrella of varied ongoing or one-time programs that spanned most of the calendar year and a broad range of interests. We formed a team that played throughout the summer in a competitive Jewish softball league, involving two games per week and Sunday morning practices. “Tennis on Tuesdays” offered a simple, inexpensive way to involve members and their children in exercise. We provided the balls and arranged a regular time on public, lit courts, every Tuesday evening throughout the Spring and Fall. An early morning Shabbat bike ride, followed by a communal breakfast before services, took place nearly every week from Spring through the Fall. A golf tournament attracted 45 players, again involving fathers and sons, and F1 car racing, which is surprisingly strenuous, created significant interest especially with younger members. All told, health and wellness became a significant part of regular programming, raised awareness among members, created tight bonds in the ongoing sports, and developed interest among younger men who then joined our club.

2. Achievements of program goals, publicity, marketing and advanced planning –

One year ago, the executive board of our club met and set an agenda of priorities in establishing a calendar of activities. Among the main goals was the promotion of health and wellness. We came up with the name “To Life!” for its strong Jewish pull and to recast the term as a call to promote improving quality and length of life through better health. Our hope was to offer something to keep members physically active throughout the year. Though plans for indoor winter volleyball didn’t happen this year, we did have activities for all other seasons. We were able to bring the message of wellness to the forefront while engaging a very large number of individuals in exercise. We utilized mailings, emails, posters, and phone invitations to participate in our different events.

3. How does the program enhance the image of the FJMC, region and/or your club

The overall health and wellness programming served to fill more active physical needs of members, who could then see that our club and the FJMC were conduits for fitness promotion. This helps members and potential members to view the Brotherhood as a place offering spiritual, educational, social, and physical benefits.

4. Include information so other clubs can use this program –

Any club can offer several of these programs at little or no cost. The softball team required payment of fees for an umpire, balls, and bats, and many areas have organized leagues that a club can join. Tennis simply required the cost of tennis balls, which members paid for on their own, as public courts were used. The pre-Shabbat morning biking simply involved laying out a reasonable route that could be completed in approximately 45 minutes. Bikers contribute kosher breakfast food that is then enjoyed in the home of one of the members. The golf tournament required significant planning and is hoped to be a growing event each year. We enlisted the assistance of club members who golf and eventually a professional organizer who joined our Brotherhood. F1 racing was a fun event tapping into one of our local resources, but demonstrates the range of physical activities available.

5. What is its value in club building - number of named club members participating vs. club size and synagogue/congregation size –

This program got numerous people involved with the Brotherhood who had never participated before. One of the new members of the softball team joined the Board of Directors this year and has already organized other programs. Friendships made in the softball league also led individuals from other communities to attend some of our Brotherhood programs. F1 Racing attracted a number of younger members, one of whom is now a Board member as well. Tennis on Tuesdays created a closely-knit group of players, who were joined by their sons at times. In total, the “To Life!” programs have involved nearly 100 different individuals. Our club has 150 members and a number of participants didn’t start out as club members. The variety of programming under one umbrella directly contributed to the large number of participants.

6. Identification of source of program or practice and description of unique aspects. Help us understand where it came from.

The push for Health and Wellness programming started two years ago after the 2007 FJMC Convention speech by Dr. Bob Braitman, challenging the FJMC to get more active and get healthier. We believe that the most innovative aspects were the catchy name, “To Life!”, and the broad variety of physical activities offered, from softball, tennis, and biking on a regular basis, to one time events such as golf and F1 Racing, which moved enough people to action as most members found something of interest.

7. Identification of this program as an adaptation of a previous Torch Award entry or other program.

N/A

Part IV. Entry Documentation

[Include your entry information in one document or provide one or more referenced documents.]

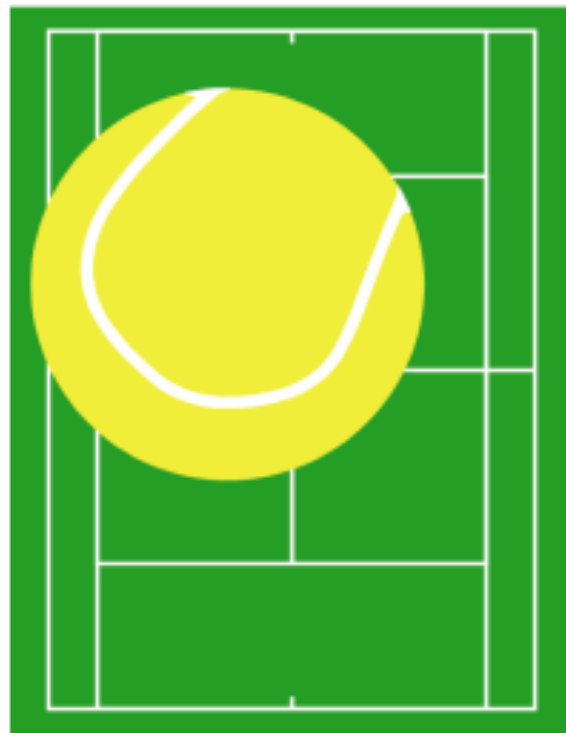


Brotherhood of Temple Israel

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Tennis on Tuesdays



Join the Brotherhood every Tuesday night this Fall for tennis!

Meet at the Deborah Sampson field lit tennis courts at 7 pm, weather permitting. Bring your kids! All are invited at any level.