

Torch Award Submission: TA11-055

- Full Title of Entry (80 char max): New Ideas for Temple Picnic and BBQ
- Entry Category (You can select up to 2, although you will only win in one):
 - Men's Club Shabbat Yom HaShoah / Yellow Candle Israel / Masorti Hebrew Literacy / Ritual Literacy
 - Hearing Men's Voices Men's Health Youth Programming Programs for Young Men (21-40)
 - World Wide Wrap Shomrei Ha'aretz Club Administration Non-FJMC Program
 - 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: Gary Katz
- Email address for Contact Person: gary.katz@csun.edu
- Club number & Club name: [#1036 – Temple Etz Chaim Men's Club]
[Is it a Men's Club or a Brotherhood? Please specify]
- Number of club members: 76
- Synagogue name, city and state: Temple Etz Chaim, Thousand Oaks, CA
- Club President name (at time of entry): Gary Katz
- Club President name (at time of convention): Gary Katz
- Person preparing entry: Gary Katz
- Email address of person preparing: gary.katz@csun.edu

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

This is our last major event for the year, we generally put together a picnic in conjunction with a Temple Membership Open House. Instead of a simple “Hamburgers and Hot Dogs” afternoon, the Temple Etz Chaim Men's Club has connected with the Temple Membership Committee and Youth Committees to bring our Temple members an afternoon of food, fun, and festivities. Finally, we plan a special “after party” for the Men's Club Members participating in planning this outstanding event.

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.

This program has not been submitted for a prior Torch Award.

Part IV. Entry Documentation

For our last major event for the year, we generally put together a picnic in conjunction with a Temple Membership Open House. This event has several purposes: 1) being planned on the last Sunday of the Religious school we want to cater to the temple communities families. We want the school kids to stay after the Religious school is over and enjoy our food and games that we have prepared for them. 2) This event involves new members who have come to the Temple for the open house to stay and enjoy a fun and friendly family picnic with our members; they are treated by the Temple Board. 3) Our members are invited to come and have a fun time, welcoming the summer-break, and just having a good time.

Innovations we have made to the traditional “Burgers and Hot Dogs” afternoon are as follows:

- 1) We have planned organized games with prizes with the children collaborating with USY and our youth director. This collaboration brings in families with young children as well as younger potential Men’s Club Members.
- 2) We collaborate with our Temple Vice President for Membership to plan a temple Open House for the same day. Confirmed and/or walk-in prospective temple members are paid for out of Membership Funds. This collaboration brings in a wide range of potential Men’s Club members as well as temple members.
- 3) Most recently, we have asked for sponsors to help defray the cost of expensive items (e.g., A Jolly Jumper, many pounds of kosher beef). We publically display and thank our sponsors at the entrance of the Picnic. Our sponsors help out to get some raffle prizes that we give out in the end of the picnic.
- 4) One hour into the picnic we have Maccabi-style games for the kids with different activities lead by A Picnic Emcee (energetic Men’s Club Member) with USY as helpers. The Emcee greets and keeps the picnic timetable on track. Everybody gets a prize; it is a win-win situation. The winners of the games get special recognition.
- 5) We have a subcommittee that plans the event. They take care of all preparation, get the sponsors onboard as well as put together the “cooking team.” After the “Main Picnic Events” have been cleaned up and the coals of the large charcoal grill are white-hot, the Picnic Subcommittee holds their Picnic After-Party: kosher grilled steaks, marinated in (inexpensive) whiskey with a selection of various libations that folks bring to share. Interest in the Picnic After-Party has increased our pool of Picnic Subcommittee members each year.

Our new approach to a temple picnic has been a huge success with attendance nearing 130 to 150 people over the past several years. Our Temple Board is very appreciative for the event since it helps them with “Open House” and end of school party is always a welcoming event by the Religious school parents. We do also attract some of our seniors since the nature of the event makes all ages compelled to get together for a couple of hours on a sunny Sunday afternoon.

Our collaboration with other temple auxiliaries (Membership, Youth) enhances the stature of the Men’s Club in our temple. While we may not claim a large success in the fundraising aspect of this event (we typically end the afternoon about a hundred dollars in the black), we clearly have increased the FUN raising across a large range of Men’s Club constituencies: youth, young men, and men new to temple life.