2013–2015 Torch Awards - Application

Before you submit this application, please print out and review the "2015 Torch Awards Overview," available on the FJMC website.

Please complete the following information. The font for all submissions should be Times New Roman. Please embed photographs of your program into this file. This completed document will be submitted to us as a Word file, named in the format: “FJMC TA 2015_ChapterName_ProgramName.doc”

Please email your completed application to: torchaward.fjmc.2015@gmail.com. If you have difficulty, please contact the Torch Award Co-Chairs for assistance at the above email address.

Clubs participating must be in good standing as of March 31, 2015 (Club dues and Membership list received by FJMC). Programs to be considered for an award must have taken place between April 1, 2013 and April 15, 2015. Entries must be received by April 22, 2015.

Section 1: Title

Club Name: Congregation B’nai Amoona, St. Louis, MO
Current Contact: Mark Givarz
Program Name: Welcoming HMV

Section 2: Contact information

Person completing form
First Name: Mark
Last Name: Givarz
E-Mail: alymark@sbcglobal.net

Club President at time of Convention
First Name: Ed
Last Name: Herzog
E-Mail: empzogg@gmail.com

Current Club President
First Name: same as above
Last Name:
E-Mail:
Section 3: Category

Please choose up to two (2) selections. Please note, you can only win in one category. The co-chairs reserve the right to reclassify your program.

- Club Administration
- Community Outreach
- FJMC Other
- Fundraising
- Health and Wellness
- **Hearing Men’s Voices**
- Jewish Observance
- Israel / Masorti
- Keruv
- Men's Club Shabbat
- Programming for Younger Men
- Shomrei Ha’aretz
- Synagogue Service Project
- World Wide Wrap
- Youth Programming
- Shoah Yellow Candle
- I’m not sure, select for our club
- **Best Overall Activities**

**To apply for this award, please see specific instructions in “2015 Torch Award Overview,” available on FJMC website**

Section 4: Program overview

Brief Summary - Please explain your program in 2-3 sentences.

An HMV program specially designed for guys who have joined our B'nai Amoona congregation and community in the last 18 months.

Detailed Summary - Please answer the following questions. Be as detailed as possible.

- What were the goals of your program? Are there specific problems or challenges that it addresses?
  - Background: Our synagogue had an increase of membership of about 65 family units in the 18 months prior to this program.
2013–2015 Torch Awards - Application

- Goals: Men’s club to personally connect to each male member of each of these family units.
- Specific challenges: When new members join a synagogue, the men sometimes feel isolated. Our program was designed to give each ‘new’ man an opportunity to get to know other ‘new’ men, using HMV as a vehicle.

- How does your program enhance the image of FJMC, your region, and your club?
  - It reinforces the idea that our club is welcoming, and uses one of the FJMC’s signature programs to help accomplish our goals.

- What is its value in building or strengthening your club?
  - This program has grown our membership.

- Who is your target audience? (i.e. congregation at large, chapter, community)?
  - New male members of the synagogue (Jewish or not).

- How does your program support FJMC’s mission, Involving Jewish Men in Jewish Life?
  - Jewish men get an opportunity to discuss Jewish values and ideals.

- Describe the source of your program and its unique aspects. Is this an original program or an adaptation or enhancement of a previous program (if so, which one)?
  - New way of using the existing HMV program.

- Please attach planning and marketing materials, as well as budgetary planning so the program can be replicated by other clubs.

Welcoming HMV Planning document:

Planning a successful Welcoming HMV program
Goal: Use the HMV vehicle as tool for welcoming all new men who joined B’nai Amoona in the past 18 months.
Committee: Mark Givarz, Max Brown, Neil Peters, Creighton Cohn, Matt Smith, Ed Herzog

High level plan:
60 days prior
- Identify new members of the shul
  - Obtain a spreadsheet of contact information from the membership committee or shul office
- Put 3 dates on the synagogue calendar, and reserve the space.
  - Target evening hours, so guys with young children can fulfill their family obligations before the beginning of the session
    - Vary days of the week.
- Budget:
  - No cost for room
  - Existing HMV budget for beer & snacks can absorb the cost of 3 extra sessions.
2013–2015 Torch Awards - Application

30 days prior

• Divide the list among the committee – about 10 individuals for each person on the committee to call.
  o Phone conversation is best
  o Details can be sent via email after conversation.
  o If multiple attempts to call, and voice mails are not returned, then an email can be sent.
  o Reminder emails need to go out 2-3 days (not Shabbat!) before each of the 3 sessions.
  o Email template needs to be developed.
  o Each member of the committee updates their list and sends to Mark for compilation on regular basis.

• Create the facilitator sheet for each HMV session (Mark, Neil)

At the event:

• Purchase snacks and beer, room set up
• Have a committee member at each of the doors of the synagogue to greet the men and direct them to the room.
• At the end of each session, we will take a few moments to describe what our club is known for, FJMC affiliation, etc. Re-state that no one is expected to join the Men’s Club as part of today’s attendance, but we wanted to take a few minutes and ‘advertise’.
  o Fun!
  o Explain FJMC.
  o Our mission - Ted Fischer Camp Scholarship Fund.
  o Help congregation.
  o Invite to upcoming events, including our ‘regular’ sessions of HMV.

• Take pictures if men consent

• Debrief after each session.

• Begin planning for sessions 2 & 3.
  o Call again as many as possible.
  o Send email reminders for next sessions.

For additional information: http://fjmc.org/content/torch-award-0 or email torchaward.fjmc.2015@gmail.com
2013–2015 Torch Awards - Application

Program Planning / Timeline - Please provide a timeline of the key tasks, participants, and responsibilities required in order to make this program work. This may be provided as an inserted table or you may replace and insert as an embedded Excel spreadsheet. Please be as detailed as possible, so that other groups may replicate your success.

See above planning document for this information.

Additional attachments:
2013–2015 Torch Awards - Application

Follow-up email template:

Use this template when following up from a phone call about the Welcoming New Members HMV Program.

Dear ________,
Thanks for chatting tonight about the program Men's Club has especially designed for guys who have joined our B'nai Amoona congregation and community in the last 18 months. I hope you can make one (of more) of these events.

Here are the details about the event.

Dates:
Wed, Jan 15, 2014
 Tues, Feb 18, 2014
 Mon, Mar 24, 2014

Each will be at 8:00 in the 'bride’s room', which is next to the main sanctuary, near the information table. Typically these sessions last about 90 minutes. The event is free…snacks and liquid refreshments are provided. (This is the Men's club after all!)
What to expect:

• Hearing Men's Voices (HMV) is designed to get men talking about issues, relationships, etc. in a safe, welcoming, confidential environment. Our club has been holding regular HMV sessions for over 5 years.
  The purpose of this new program is to give all of the new men an opportunity to meet each other, and to get to know one another a little better.
  Potential topics we may explore: "Our Jewish Journeys", "Being a Jewish Father", "How are we defined by our Work?"

• Our club has won multiple awards & recognition from the international organization FJMC (Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs) for our innovative HMV programming...Check out our 'wall' near the synagogue offices to see some of our awards!

• Men's club membership is not a requirement or expectation to participate.

Please let me know which events you are considering coming.

Please let me know if you have any questions..

Looking forward to seeing you soon,

Mark Givarz
B'nai Amoona Men's Club Past President

For additional information: http://fjmc.org/content/torch-award-0 or email torchaward.fjmc.2015@gmail.com
**2013–2015 Torch Awards - Application**

New member’s spreadsheet:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Notes/Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Doe</td>
<td>555-1234</td>
<td><a href="mailto:john.doe@email.com">john.doe@email.com</a></td>
<td>Contacted, sent email follow-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Doe</td>
<td>555-5678</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jane.doe@email.com">jane.doe@email.com</a></td>
<td>Open-minded, sent email follow-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>555-9087</td>
<td><a href="mailto:alex@email.com">alex@email.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>555-3210</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sarah@email.com">sarah@email.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For additional information: [http://fjmc.org/content/torch-award](http://fjmc.org/content/torch-award) or email torchaward.fjmc.2015@gmail.com
SESSION 1:

Our topic for discussion tonight is “Jewish Men at the Crossroads”

Introduction

It is often said that, when lost or at a crossroads, men refuse to ask for directions. They would rather stubbornly wander around or go the wrong way than admitting they don’t know the answer. What this means to each of us will undoubtedly vary, but we hope to explore some answers. Each of us will have our own answers and that is what we are going to discuss. I hope you will all share your points of view and listen to others. Maybe you will agree, maybe you will disagree, maybe your opinion will change, maybe it won’t, maybe you will learn something and maybe, I hope, all of these will happen.

In order to have a meaningful discussion, I want to start out with a few ground rules.

**Ground rules:**

1. Our goal is to have an open discussion where everyone’s opinion is respected, not criticized. Conversation is encouraged, confrontation is not.
2. The conversation will often be of a rather personal nature, so please respect everyone’s privacy by agreeing that all comments made in this space stay in this space.
3. Please discuss only your *own* opinion from your *own* experiences.
4. Please allow others time to speak as well and don’t interrupt.
5. My role as facilitator is to keep the conversation on track, as well as to do my best to ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak. In that role, it may be needed to gently interrupt, or redirect someone. Please try to be understanding.

***Add a brief introduction...***

*Since everyone here recently joined BA, please take a moment to introduce yourself, and mention briefly your circumstances in joining BA (new to town, previously unaffiliated, changed shuls, conversion, etc.).*

**Starting Questions:**

**Jewish Men, Then & Now –**

How is it different to be a real man (“manliness”) today vs in our father’s generation?

Does the manly ideal take a mental/emotional/physical toll on us?

Describe the “mystery” of our fathers, and how it has impacted you as a man? Is/Was he an ideal you want to emulate, or avoid?

What have we learned from the challenges we’ve confronted in the earlier stages of our lives? What have we learned along the way, or those challenges we are dealing with now?

**From Shakespeare to Homer Simpson: What Happened to Men? –**
2013–2015 Torch Awards - Application

The deterioration of the North American male – are we really more passive/less engaged/taking a back seat?
Has the Image of the Prototypical Man Changed in the Media and, if so, how has that Impacted on your own Self-Image and your actions as a male/Jewish male in our Contemporary World? How has this impacted your relationships?

I Don’t Want to Talk about It:
Men are not supposed to be vulnerable..
Is this a popular misconception?
Do we think our spouses agree or disagree?

The next dates for this special series of HMV are Tuesday, February 18, and Monday, March 24. Our next ‘regular’ HMV next session is Thursday, January 30.

At the end, take 5 minutes to describe the culture and mission of BA Men’s Club, as well as some upcoming events. Re-state that no one is expected to join the Men’s Club as part of today’s attendance, but we wanted to take a few minutes and ‘advertise’.

• We enjoy having fun! We have annual events such as ‘Scotch in the Sukkot’ and ‘Demolition Ball’
• We are affiliated with Federation of Jewish Men’s Clubs, an international organization. We also are part of the Midwest region of FJMC. We have members who serve both the regional and international organizations.
• Our main mission is to raise money for the Ted Fischer Camp Scholarship Fund, which annually distributes money to families in need to help the children of our congregation attend Jewish summer camps and trips to Israel. Last year we distributed well over $10,000 to families in need.
• We also help underwrite other needs in the congregation, such as the 10th grade trip to Washington, D.C., Holiday Wrap, Passport to Israel, and the Yom Hashoah Candles
• Our next club event is the World Wide Wrap, which happens Super Bowl Sunday, Feb 2, and 8:30 am in the chapel. Men (and women) from synagogues around the world gather to wear tefillin and join in the Sunday morning minyan. If it has been a while since you have worn tefillin, bring your set (or we have some loaners) and we can help you learn (or re-learn). Feel free to bring your spouses and/or children to this event! Of course, there will be food afterwards.
• Saturday, Feb 22, is our annual Men’s Club Shabbat. Let us know if you would like to participate (in Hebrew or English).
• Sunday, March 23, will be our annual Man of the Year Luncheon, held at Kol Rinah (formerly Shaare Zedek/BSKI). For the first time this year, we will be also honoring the Youth of the Year. This is a joint program held with both the congregations, and is part of the Midwest Region Man of the Year program, where a similar event is held in Chicago.
• Mother’s day Brunch

Thank you for attending today!
SESSION 2

Introduction

Tonight we are going to explore the topic “Work and Worth”

Each of us will have our own answers and that is what we are going to discuss. I hope you will all share your points of view and listen to others. Maybe you will agree, maybe you will disagree, maybe your opinion will change, maybe it won’t, maybe you will learn something and maybe, I hope, all of these will happen.

In order to have a meaningful discussion, I want to start out with a few ground rules.

6. Our goal is to have an open discussion where everyone’s opinion is respected, not criticized. Conversation is encouraged, confrontation is not.
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8. Please discuss only your own opinion from your own experiences.
9. Please allow others time to speak as well and don’t interrupt.
10. My role as facilitator is to keep the conversation on track, as well as to do my best to ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak. In that role, it may be needed to gently interrupt, or redirect someone. Please try to be understanding.

*** Add a brief introduction...

Since everyone here recently joined BA, please take a moment to introduce yourself, and mention briefly your circumstances in joining BA (new to town, previously unaffiliated, changed shuls, conversion, etc.)

Starting Questions:

Self-Definitions

Are you defined by your work?
Is your job your career?
How does your work, your job, affect your self-image? Your relationships?
How does a man’s job define him differently than a woman’s job (such as your spouse)?
How are your passions enhanced (or constricted) by your work? … Would you (or have you) quit your job to follow your passion?

Work and Family

Describe your challenge of juggling work and family responsibilities
When I use the term work/life balance, what does that mean to you?
If you had a great job offer, but it requires a relocation, how would you feel? How could that affect your immediate and extended families?

Work and Ethics

For additional information: http://fjmc.org/content/torch-award-0 or email torchaward.fjmc.2015@gmail.com
2013-2015 Torch Awards - Application

Have you ever been in a situation where your work and your ethics have conflicted? If so, how have you handled this?

How do you balance your Judaism with your job?

What is Success?

What is your definition of success?

Mid life job loss

Have you ever been laid off or fired?

If we are (even somewhat) defined by our work, how do you feel when you are out of work?

How did a job loss work out for you in the long run vs. the short run? In retrospect, was this a good or bad chapter in your life? Why or why not?

If you are retired, or considering retirement, how will you be defined when you are no longer working?

The final for this special series of HMV is Monday, March 24.

Our next ‘regular’ HMV next session is Thursday, March 6.

At the end, take 5 minutes to describe the culture and mission of BA Men’s Club, as well as some upcoming events. Re-state that no one is expected to join the Men’s Club as part of today’s attendance, but we wanted to take a few minutes and ‘advertise’.

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- We also help underwrite other needs in the congregation, such as the 10th grade trip to Washington, D.C., Holiday Wrap, Passport to Israel, and the Yom Hashoah Candles
- This Saturday, Feb 22, is our annual Men’s Club Shabbat. We’d love to have you come, and even if you don’t have a formal part in the service, please join us on the bimah for the closing hymns.
- Sunday, March 23, will be our annual Man of the Year Luncheon, held at Kol Rinah (formerly Shaare Zedek/BSKI). For the first time this year, we will be also honoring the Youth of the Year. This is a joint program held with both the congregations, and is part of the Midwest Region Man of the Year program, where a similar event is held in Chicago.
- Mother’s day Brunch – May 11
- Dad & Me, date to be determined.

Thank you for attending today!
SESSION 3:

Welcoming HMV #3

Tonight we are going to explore the topic “Our Jewish Journey”

Each of us will have our own answers and that is what we are going to discuss. I hope you will all share your points of view and listen to others. Maybe you will agree, maybe you will disagree, maybe your opinion will change, maybe it won’t, maybe you will learn something and maybe, I hope, all of these will happen. In order to have a meaningful discussion, I want to start out with a few ground rules.

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14. Please allow others time to speak as well and don’t interrupt.

15. My role as facilitator is to keep the conversation on track, as well as to do my best to ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak. In that role, it may be needed to gently interrupt, or redirect someone. Please try to be understanding.

*** Add a brief introduction…

Since everyone here recently joined BA, please take a moment to introduce yourself, and mention briefly your circumstances in joining BA (new to town, previously unaffiliated, changed shuls, conversion, etc.)

Questions to start with:

There are several ways to approach this subject. Some of us may have been raised Jewish and kept a Jewish identity our whole lives. Some of us may have ‘disconnected’ for a period of time. Some of us may have recently chosen to become Jewish. Some of us may not be Jewish, but our wife is, so we have committed to a Jewish home. Or maybe something else altogether. Who would like to begin?

What type of unexpected surprises have come along the way? (Good or bad)

How has your family affected your journey (childhood family, married family)

Why is identifying yourself (or your family) as Jewish important in your life?

Have you ever explored other religions or spiritual paths in order to seek God? (What does “seeking God” mean to you?)

Does being surrounded by a Jewish community (such as in shul, community at large, etc.) affect your experience with Judaism? How?

Like Jacob, we have all probably, at some time, ‘wrestled’ with God. Who would like to speak as to how this affected their journey.

Other questions…

• Questioning the existence of God & how this may have affected you.
• Do you ever try to tune God out from your experiences?
2013–2015 Torch Awards - Application

- Why/when?
  - How can we give our children, thoughtful, honest, and religiously significant explanations for their experiences with God?
- Are the answers you give your children to questions about God in conflict with your thoughts and beliefs about God?
- Do you find that by listening to children's questions about God you learn something about the nature of God that you have forgotten or didn’t know?
  - Have you personally met (or not met) God?
- Please share how this may (or may not) have affected you.
- Can Jews have a personal relationship with God?
  - Since one focus of Judaism is on the community and communal relationship and worship of God, and since the Torah states that God has only had a personal relationship with the prophets, does claiming to have a personal relationship with God make one a prophet/crazy etc?
  - Do you have an image of God?
- Is it the God of Moses (burning bush, mountain top, cloud, Old Guy with a beard etc.) your image of God?
  - What is the way you describe God to others? (family, children/parents, Jewish and Gentile friends, etc.)
  - Can we only relate to God through our observations and our human experiences or can we relate on a deeper inward level of direct communication?

This is the final for this special series of HMV.
Our next ‘regular’ HMV next session is May 8.

At the end, take 5 minutes to describe the culture and mission of BA Men’s Club, as well as some upcoming events. Re-state that no one is expected to join the Men’s Club as part of today’s attendance, but we wanted to take a few minutes and ‘advertise’.

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- Mother’s day Brunch – May 11
2013–2015 Torch Awards - Application

- Dad & Me, this Sunday, March 30, 10:00 am. Free event with Food, Ruach, and a Craft Project. Dads & Grandads and kids under 6.

Thank you for attending today!

Section 5: Certification

I certify that my club has not won a Gold Torch Award for essentially the same program in a previous year. (Previous silver and bronze winners in this category that submit an enhanced application only qualify to be considered for a Gold Torch award.)

Certification: Initials: mg

Section 6: Pictures

For all non-Shabbat programs, please attach photographs of your program.

For additional information: [http://fjmc.org/content/torch-award-0](http://fjmc.org/content/torch-award-0) or email torchaward.fjmc.2015@gmail.com
2013–2015 Torch Awards - Application

For additional information: http://fjmc.org/content/torch-award-0 or email torchaward.fjmc.2015@gmail.com
Section 7: Video

If possible, we ask that you please create a 3-5 minute video describing your program. Feel free to be creative in your submission, but try to include the following components:

- brief introduction, including name and goal of the program
- how did you encourage participation in the program
- how did you make the program meaningful to participants
- impact of the program to your club, synagogue and community

DO NOT ATTACH VIDEO TO THIS APPLICATION. Files are to be uploaded directly to YouTube, named in the following format:

“FJMC Torch Awards 2015_ChapterName_ProgramName_#”

Please review detailed instructions in the document “2015 Torch Award Overview.”
2013–2015 Torch Awards - Application

**REPLACE/INSERT YOUR VIDEO URL(S) HERE***