Section 1: Title

Club Name: Congregation Beth Shalom Men’s Club
Current Contact: Larry Grossman
Program Name: Keruv

Section 2: Contact information

Person completing form
First Name: Robert
Last Name: Spector
E-Mail: drbob1850@aol.com

Club President at time of Convention
First Name: Scott
Last Name: Rogoff
E-Mail: rogofflaw@gmail.com

Current Club Co-Presidents
First Name: Larry/Raymond
Last Name: Grossman/Rokni
E-Mail: larrydgrossman@gmail.com

Section 3: Category

☐ Keruv

Section 4: Program overview

These programs were a response to the issue of the false belief that the Conservative movement and Congregation Beth Shalom cannot be responsive to the needs of our intermarried couples who are interested in maintaining their affiliation to a Conservative synagogue.

Our two Keruv programs of the past two years were:
(1) An Interfaith Shabbat - Making Judaism Part of Our Lives: The Why’s and the How’s and
(2) A Conversation With Our Clergy: Where We Were, Where We Are, and Where We Are Headed.
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These were an integral part of our multi-faceted Keruv/Interfaith Initiative that accomplished these objectives:

- Welcoming, embracing, and encouraging our intermarried couples to be participants in synagogue life.
- Emphasizing relational Judaism through increased volunteerism and becoming more inclusive of all Conservative Jews regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, and marital status.

KERUV PROGRAMS:


In an unprecedented move, a Saturday morning Shabbat service featured a group discussion of issues and challenges faced by interfaith families in our congregation community. This discussion included the clergy, the Keruv committee leader Dr. Robert Spector, members of the committee and the congregation at large. It took place in lieu of the sermon that morning and a very open and candid discussion of how to make interfaith families feel more comfortable and welcomed. Everyone who participated felt they both learned and broadened their perspective based upon the experience.

2. A Conversation With Our Clergy – Where We Were, Where We Are, and Where We Are Headed

- Why Congregation Beth Shalom embraced the Keruv Initiative developed by the Federation of Jewish Men’s Clubs eight years ago and how our synagogue has evolved to be more accepting and supportive of our interfaith families.
- 40% of the Jews in the Chicagoland area under the age of 40 marry someone who is not Jewish.
- 50% of our congregants have at least one family member who is either married to or significantly involved with someone who is not Jewish.
- Why is Keruv important to Beth Shalom?
- Why our clergy cannot officiate at interfaith marriages, but at the same time are committed to being accepting and welcoming of an interfaith couple who chooses to be part of our community.

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• The many ways our non-Jewish family members can actively participate in synagogue life including their participation in their children’s B’nai Mitzvah, and much, much more….

While enhancing our image is not a primary objective, we did receive the following benefits:

• Our Interfaith Shabbat program created one of our most intimate and meaningful services by our panel participants sharing their stories with our congregation.

• Our Conversation with the Clergy program was a clear statement that our Clergy are giving their absolute support of our Keruv/Interfaith Initiative. This was also an opportunity to get to know our Clergy in a more personal and intimate venue

This helps building or strengthening your club in the following ways:

All our Keruv programs are co-sponsored by our Men’s Club. We are clearly identified as a branch of the synagogue that promotes inclusion, acceptance, and volunteerism as integral values that enhance the spiritual life of Congregation Beth Shalom.

Our target audience for these programs were our intermarried couples/families as well as our members who have adult children who are either married to/have significant others with someone who is not Jewish.

It supports FJMC’s mission of Involving Jewish Men in Jewish Life as follows:

All our Keruv programs have included men who have shared their stories (in line with our Hearing Men’s Voices initiative) with their fellow congregants. The Men’s Club has been an integral support of these programs both financially (we have provided a Keruv line item in our Men’s Club budget for the last two years) and providing the necessary manpower to prepare meals associated with the programs and developing marketing strategies to promote the programs. In addition, we include a Keruv report at every monthly Men’s Club board meeting.

• Our programs are unique to the best of our collective knowledge. They are original programs.

We are not aware of other synagogues whose clergy have been such active participants in all our Keruv programs, including their willingness to diverge from Shabbat tradition by having a panel discussion as part of the Shabbat morning service.

• I have attached general planning and marketing materials, as well as budgetary planning so the program can be replicated by other clubs.

There were no financial costs incurred for these two programs. Included are the two flyers developed by our Keruv consultant and our MC marketer.
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Program Planning / Timeline – The following is a general timeline of the key tasks, participants, and responsibilities required in order to make this program work.

These two programs were not labor intensive. While we have a Keruv committee at Beth Shalom, our Keruv consultant and one member of our committee (who does our marketing) in collaboration with our clergy were able to develop and promote the programs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Tasks for Interfaith Shabbat</th>
<th>Committee/Assignee</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meet with Rabbi (co-facilitator) to develop format and identify potential participants for panel discussion</td>
<td>Keruv consultant</td>
<td>90 days before program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop questions to be addressed for panel participants</td>
<td>Rabbi and Keruv consultant</td>
<td>30 days before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with panel participants to review questions and format</td>
<td>Rabbi and Keruv consultant</td>
<td>30 days before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create flyer to appear in synagogue bulletin</td>
<td>Keruv consultant and marketing committee member</td>
<td>60 days before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with Clergy to discuss format</td>
<td>Participating Clergy and Keruv consultant</td>
<td>60 days before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create flyer to appear in synagogue bulletin</td>
<td>Keruv consultant and marketing committee member</td>
<td>60 days before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finalize Q and A format with Clergy</td>
<td>Clergy and Keruv consultant</td>
<td>30 days before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with MC House VP to review room setup and anticipated attendance to assure breakfast crew availability</td>
<td>Keruv consultant and MC house VP</td>
<td>Two weeks before</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.)
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Certification: Initials: ______RS_______

Section 6: Pictures

Beth Shalom’s Keruv Initiative:
A Conversation with Our Clergy
Where We Were, Where We Are, and Where We Are Headed

Sunday December 7, 2014
Breakfast at 9:30am ($7)
Program from 10-11am (no charge)

- Why Beth Shalom embraced the Keruv Initiative developed by the Federation of Jewish Men’s Clubs eight years ago and how our synagogue has evolved to be more accepting and supportive of our interfaith families.

- 40% of the Jews in the Chicagoland area under the age of 40 marry someone who is not Jewish.

- 50% of our congregants have at least one family member who is either married to or significantly involved with someone who is not Jewish.

- Why is Keruv important to Beth Shalom?

- Why our clergy cannot officiate at interfaith marriages, but at the same time are committed to being accepting and welcoming of an interfaith couple who chooses to be part of our community.

- The many ways our non-Jewish family members can actively participate in synagogue life including their participation in their children’s B’nai Mitzvah, and much, much more....

Congregation Beth Shalom
3433 Walters, Northbrook, IL

RSVP required by December 3rd

Please call the office at 847-498-4100

For additional information: http://fjmc.org/content/torch-award-0 or email torchaward.fjmc.2015@gmail.com
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FOR GIRLS
BABY NAMINGS (in the Synagogue)  SIMCHAT BAT (At Home)

Girls of Jewish mothers, or girls who have been converted to Judaism by immersion in the mikveh, may be brought to the synagogue for a naming at the Torah. Both parents will ascend the bima (pulpit) for the naming.

For a Simchat Bat, home naming, the Rabbi will be happy to assist in choosing meaningful ceremonial readings for the non-Jewish family members.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH CELEBRATIONS
(Presentation of the Tallit, Prayer Shawl)

In the spirit of inclusion, we present the tallit in the center of the sanctuary just before the service begins for all to experience. Therefore, both parents present the tallit along with special blessings and words of encouragement. Both parents also recite a prayer in English in front of the open Ark just before the Torah is taken out of the Ark. Honors involving the Torah, in particular, Ark openings and sikat (Torah blessings), are reserved for Jewish members of the family.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Our website www.bethshalommb.org has more information about the synagogue and its Keruv Interfaith Initiative.

WHAT KERUV MEANS AT BETH SHALOM

The Keruv Interfaith Initiative is one part of the Beth Shalom Family dealing with the ever-changing world and Conservative Judaism. In responding to these challenges, through our Keruv initiative, we are welcoming interfaith families. We have developed guidelines for your participation in synagogue life and for the education of your children. In keeping with the meaning of the word Keruv, to “draw near,” we wish to do just that, with the realization that the fabric of our family life will be enhanced by its diversity.

Your opportunities for involvement in our Congregation Beth Shalom community are very broad. You may participate in and explore our outstanding educational, social, community service and religious programs. Our community is dedicated to help all people who want to be part of our synagogue to grow spiritually and morally as human beings by experiencing the richness of our Jewish heritage and tradition. All of us are on a journey to find meaning in our lives. The best way to do this is in the company of a caring community of others who share the same aspirations.

COME PRAY WITH US!

Join us on Friday evening, Saturday morning, Holidays and at our Daily Morning and Evening Services. Participate in congregational worship as much as you wish.

We welcome the entire family to worship with us.

CELEBRATE LIFE WITH US!

We welcome your entire family to celebrate life cycle events with us.

DATE/DATES
BRIT MILAH CEREMONIES
(Covenant of Circumcision)

Boys are to be ritually circumcised. The mohel (the person performing the circumcision) will help determine the extent of the non-Jewish parent’s participation. For sons of non-Jewish mothers, the brit milah is the first step in the conversion process. The additional requirement of mikveh (ritual immersion) must take place to complete conversion to Judaism.

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