Torch Award Submission

Area Club Concept

Case Study: Greater Knoxville Jewish Men’s Club

**Summary**

This concept is perfect for areas that have few Jewish men, especially few that are interested in men's club. The idea is to have a single men's club that is based out of the local Jewish Community Center instead of a single shul and accepts members that are affiliated with any branch of Judaism; share resources and share volunteers as One Jewish Community.

**Background**

Knoxville is a small community compared to others, such as Atlanta. We have fewer men and even fewer volunteers. We decided to form our new men's club underneath the umbrella of our local Jewish Community Center. From an administration standpoint, this is advantageous because all our finances are managed by JCC staff. We give them our dues and submit requests for reimbursements; they handle the bookkeeping. After all, our club focus is involving Jewish men and non-Jewish male partners of Jews (regardless of if they identify as conservative, reform, orthodox, or unaffiliated) in Jewish life and community.

We operate similar to any of the FJMC men’s clubs would except we are mindful that not all of our club members are part of the conservative movement or perhaps not members of a shul. Most of our events are social, but we do offer opportunities for ritual observance such as participating in the World Wide Wrap, attending regional retreat, and other FJMC programs where applicable.

**Achievements**

In a very short time frame, under 1 month, we had a club logo, website, Facebook page, and club t-shirts for members.

Before COVID we had a number of well-attended monthly dinners.

On April 1st, 2020 we immediately switched to meeting monthly on zoom to schmooze and keep in touch, with occasional club business items.

We earned our first Quality Club award in 2020.

**Who Would Benefit?**

Any club that has a dwindling headcount or lack of members willing to step into leadership roles may benefit from expanding their existing club by partnering with the men of other local congregations.

The local Jewish Community in its entirety will benefit from a unified men’s club that is inclusive of men from all branches of Judaism, similar to a local community chapter of Hadassah.

This is the perfect path for starting a club in any town that does not currently have a men’s club because it shares resources beyond the limits of a single shul.