**2021 Torch Award Application
Temple Israel Men’s Club, Charlotte, NC**

**Category: Best Overall Activities**

**Title: A Fully Great Year**

**Date: 2020-21**

**Summary: This year our Men's Club Shabbat theme was "Growth after Trauma," and our long-time member Dan Biber delivered a great sermon that talked about our People's history of making the most of bad situations dating back to our time as slaves in Egypt. There have been good things to come from our time of Covid, and a transition to a new Men's Club approach and energy has been one of those things.**

**Details: Ten years ago in my first term as Club president, I started gently hounding a young, otherwise engaged dad to get involved with Club leadership. I followed all the tips from Rabbi Simon's book, but Josh kept telling me he didn't have time. "When I'm not traveling so much for business and I have more time, I'll get involved." Fast forward to our Covid shutdown. He didn't have to travel as much and his business wasn't as demanding, and he was stuck by his own words. We spent the last year working together so he could learn how to successfully run a Men's Club--he learned the value and intricacies of FJMC, he attended LDI, he learned how to navigate synagogue politics and work with the staff, and perhaps most importantly, he brought other young dads along with him. We hammered home that when we focus on providing opportunities to build stronger relationships in a Jewish context, we can do really great things. Soon after Convention he will be our next president, and he says that if something doesn't provide an opportunity for deeper meaning and stronger connections, the Men's Club won't be involved. This is truly the way to use Leadership-Innovation-Community to do what we're supposed to do. Beginning with a formal Board Orientation session through both micro and macro events, Temple Israel's Men's Club has had a truly outstanding year. That we have accomplished all we have while teaching the next group of guys to take over makes our success even sweeter.**

**Timeline: We started planning last summer by identifying which “old guard” would be good mentors for the “new blood.” That led to the creation of our Orientation document and planning for the year ahead.**

**Impact: The impact of our Men’s Club year will be felt at Temple Israel for a long time. Through our example of focusing on providing opportunities for building stronger relationships in a Jewish context, we have dramatically shown our entire kehillah that the traditional programs and transactions approach to what we offer is no longer adequate. Ron Wolfson would kvell at the demonstration of Relational Judaism we have employed this year, and one result has been attracting a new group of younger men to get involved because we have delivered not just programs and activities but meaning and connection.**

**Our year: Formal Board Orientation session**

 **Sunday “Eggs and Kegs” social gathering for brunch and a beer**

**Monday Minyan Mixer Zoom call talking about High Holiday Traditions around the world**

 **Hybrid in-person/Zoom Bourbon Tasting**

**Several HeBrews Coffee Club gatherings for religious school dads, hosted by different MC leaders each time**

**Zoom Movie Night and Discussion**

**Temple Cleanup, Sock Drive, and Geniza burial**

**Grill & Chill cookout with clothing drive and fundraising for a homeless shelter and impromptu in-person Mincha minyan**

**Hybrid in-person/Zoom World Wide Wrap**

**In-Person Men’s Club Shabbat with members leading services and delivering d’var Torah and sermon**

**Packing and home delivery of more than 110 Men’s Club Shabbat Gift Bags with Friday night supplies, Havdallah kits, and Yom HaShoah Memorial candles**

**MCS Havdallah party with members bringing their new Havdallah sets**

**Lag B’Omer bonfire and steak dinner**

**Two men attended LDI**

**Two men attended the Anshei Darom Regional Retreat**

**Several men will attend Convention**