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

**Category: Synagogue Service Project/Community Outreach**

**Title: Day of Service**

**Date: 2/28/2021**

**Summary: MC hosted an in-person, outdoor minyan and breakfast then a bunch of guys with saws, clippers, and power washers went to work cleaning synagogue sidewalks and trimming trees and shrubs while others schlepped sacred books and documents to the Hebrew cemetery for later burial. We combined this with a sock drive for our neighbors in need with a collection at Sunday school (for the limited in-person attendees).**

**Details: Because Temple Israel didn’t open our building last HHD, we didn’t spend the money we normally would sprucing up the place, and our landscaping service didn’t handle big projects, just grass cutting. Starting with an in-person Sunday minyan is our way of showing others that careful in-person praying can be safely done. We started with a question for our temple staff—“What can our guys do to help around here?” That led to a number of projects that we are good at. We asked for helpers and got a very enthusiastic response. Guys were very happy to get out of the house, do something physical that helped Temple Israel, and have fun with other guys. Another suggested adding a sock drive for our neighbors in need, and we collected more than 600 pairs of new socks to donate.**

**Timeline: Weather-permitting, this is a perfect Tu b’Shvat or Earth Day program! As a “micro-program,” it takes 3-4 weeks to plan and execute a day like this. Start with the discussion with temple staff about what are the needs, choose a date, and start promoting to line up power washers, clippers, saws, and guys to use them. Programs like this that include a “bring-a-friend, make-a-friend” approach are important to us.**

**Impact: The temple looks a lot better, some parents were able to involve their children in the Geniza burial mitzvah, and guys had a good time, even asking when we can plan another such day to do more in other areas of need around the building. The impact of 600 pairs of socks was also quite significant.**