70th Anniversary Gala Luncheon

Torch Award Application Summary

In addition to the information included in the uploads to our Torch Award application, we offer this summary of key information for your consideration and review.

# Overview

To celebrate our Club’s 70th Anniversary, we created a luncheon event including food, entertainment, a museum of memorabilia of Club history, presentations by synagogue and civic leaders and fund-raising for a gift to our synagogue.

# Program Plan

The program took 8 weeks to arrange, though announcements of the event went out 12 weeks in advance. Ideally, this should have taken 14-16 weeks, but the first 2 Chairmen had to back out for significant personal reasons. The steps:

* Invitation list
  + current Club members
  + synagogue officers
  + past Club presidents
  + former Rabbis and Cantors of the synagogue
  + civic leaders and government representatives
  + past winners of Club Man of the Year
  + past winners of our Memorial scholarship
* Ordered and addressed invitations – group activity of Club volunteers
* Press announcement – local newspapers and Jewish newspapers
* Write entertainment – 3 parts
  + Song celebrating Club accomplishments sung to *There Ain’t Nothing Like a Dame* (“There Ain’t Nothing Like Our Club”)
  + Slide montage honoring past officers, events
  + Candle lighting ceremony honoring past presidents and their families
  + “Ballet” dance number (Club members in tights and tutus dancing to Swan Lake)
* Schedule and run several rehearsals for the entertainment (words, music, “blocking”)
* Recruit photographer and videographer – we solicited student volunteers from the town High School photography club
* Menu planning– we opted for a buffet to allow workers to fully participate in the day
* Room layout planning – sponsor tables, guest/VIP tables, food and performance areas
* Registration – coordinate reservations, table cards, name tags and money handling (for those who did not pre-pay).
* Custom *kippot* to commemorate the event
* Master of Ceremonies coordinated all speakers and the flow of the day
* Prepare a presentation on the donation to the Synagogue in honor of the event (we had decided earlier in the year that we would donate a video display system for the front lobby to replace the many posters that littered our front entrance).
* List, collect, organize and label the elements of our “museum of past events”
  + programs
  + newsletters
  + letters of recognition
  + photos and posters
  + member application cards from the very early days of the club
  + yellow candles
  + presidential gavel
  + presidential copy of the Torah (donated by the wife of a past president – every president since has signed the copy and passed it to his successor as part of our induction ceremony)
  + FJMC Torch Award plaques
  + samples of other award we give out
  + past presidents plaque (which hangs in the synagogue lobby)
  + our Purim Carnival Marble Raceway game (created 10 years ago and kept up for annual re-use) an event program that listed past award winners going back 50 years (among other things)

# Impact on our Club and the FJMC

This event enhanced the Club’s long-established reputation in our synagogue. We had the opportunity to remind everyone of the Club’s long history, and to celebrate it. We also strengthened our relationships with some of our local leaders, including the Deputy Mayor (now the Mayor) of Fair Lawn, who attended our event.

This program supports FJMC objectives of Leadership, Innovation, Community.

Leadership: the coordination, partnership and organization required to create and execute this event were mammoth. Many men stepped up to lead different parts of this event.

Innovation: we believe the idea of a Club Museum adds a new dimension of history and connection to the past which will augment any Men’s Club event. This will enhance Founders Breakfasts, induction ceremonies and any anniversary celebrations

Community: This event involved members of the religious and civic community of our area. In addition, involving our past award winners reminded them that they are part of our community even all these years after their recognition.

# In Conclusion

Few Men’s Clubs have a 70-year history, but EVERY FJMC club has beginnings and history worth celebrating! This event created strong links to that past for all of our members and helped us re-connected with many people who had moved out of our area – retirees who sent messages or came to the event, and past scholarship and award winners who joined us to celebrate. Because of the generosity of our guests and the prudence of the planners, this event ran at a substantial profit for the Club allowing us to make a substantial gift to our synagogue. But the real “profit” was in the strong memories that we rekindled and created on that day.