**COVID-19 SJMC Torch Awards – Detailed Program Document**

The South Jersey Men’s Club, through a multi-pronged effort, successfully adapted to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We continued to maintain regular programs, and came up with new and innovative programs as needed. Details follow.

* As soon as things started shutting down as a result of COVID-19, the South Jersey Men’s Club made a commitment to continue to hold its monthly Sunday morning meetings every month, by Zoom rather than in person, and successfully did so. One of the earliest programs – held April 12, 2020 – was a Zoom meeting titled “COVID-19 and You,” in which a physician who is the director of the Infectious Diseases department at the Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia gave a very informative presentation and answered numerous questions regarding COVID-19. Another meeting – held February 28, 2021 – featured a physical therapist discussing “Staying Active during a Pandemic.” Other meetings covered such timely topics as the Jewish African-American experience, thoughts from a New Jersey Jewish Medal of Honor recipient, and the personal experiences of a local U.S. congressman at the Capitol on January 6, 2021. Attendance for these Zoom events ranged from 40 to 50 people, similar to our prior in‑person events.
* Several days before a number of the monthly meetings, particularly at the start of the pandemic, South Jersey Men’s Club board members contacted by phone every club member to not only tell them about the upcoming meetings but to reach out during this difficult time to see how people were doing and offer assistance and comfort as needed (many of our members are more than 65 years of age). There were several instances when these outreach efforts resulted in members being assisted, such by helping a member enroll for Meals on Wheels.
* When the COVID vaccines started becoming available in early 2021, South Jersey Men’s Club sent out detailed and user-friendly e-mails to all its members on how to navigate the New Jersey vaccine enrollment systems. Many of the members used this information, and some of our more technically savvy members helped others get signed up for their vaccines in a timely manner. For example, after one of our members noted that he could not get his first vaccine appointment until May 2021, he was contacted by another member, who helped him reschedule to a February 2021 appointment.
* We increased our efforts to assist the local food bank, with which we have long been affiliated, including providing kosher foods. We continued to volunteer to stock shelves on a regular basis. Also, to meet special needs that arose as part of the pandemic, some of our members volunteered to deliver food to homes.
* We initiated fund-raising efforts to help the community. As of March 1, 2021, the South Jersey Men’s Club raised $16,217 for the COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund administered by the local Jewish Family and Children’s Service. This included donations of $11,217 by 32 different members in addition to a $5,000 match by the club.