

Torch Award Submission: TA11- 030

- Full Title of Entry (80 char max): **Dad & Me with the ECC**
- Entry Category (You can select up to 2, although you will only win in one):
 - Men's Club Shabbat Yom HaShoah / Yellow Candle Israel / Masorti Hebrew Literacy / Ritual Literacy
 - Hearing Men's Voices Men's Health Youth Programming Programs for Young Men (21-40)
 - World Wide Wrap Shomrei Ha'aretz Club Administration Non-FJMC Program
 - Best Overall Programming* [*Best Overall Programming is not on the basis of a single program, but your club's entire year. A single program submitted in this category will be re-categorized.]
 - I'm not sure, so please select for our club's submission.
- Contact Person: Creighton Cohn.
- Email address for Contact Person: cohncj@yahoo.com
- Club number & Club name: # 631 B'nai Amoona Men's Club
- Number of club members: 100
- Synagogue name, city and state: Congregation B'nai Amoona, St. Louis, Missouri
- Club President name (at time of entry): Creighton Cohn
- Club President name (at time of convention): Creighton Cohn
- Person preparing entry: Rick Dorshow (Secretary, B'nai Amoona Men's Club)
- Email address of person preparing: rbdorshow@gmail.com

Part II. Summary Information:

Our **Dad & Me with the ECC** is a collaborative event we do with our congregation's Early Childhood Center (ECC). The ECC is the school year program for kids of ages 1-5 years old. We first did this event in January of 2010, and then repeated in January of 2011 (see the two attached advertisement flyers from the synagogue bulletin). Its success has now put it on our annual schedule of activities.

The event is organized and staffed by a committee of dads from the ECC and members of the Men's Club (with some overlap). Dads and kids of ECC age are invited for a morning of breakfast, a singing/dancing activity with a musician, and a craft project, all at no charge. It has become a great success, drawing participation from our ECC families, and from the general congregation too (see pictures on next page of musical activity, and of Dads and kids hard at work on a craft project). Besides an enjoyable experience for all, a direct consequence of this event has been the addition of new (and younger) members to the Men's Club. Furthermore, this event established a great relationship with our ECC, which has led to several other joint events in the past year.

Part III. By submitting this document, I certify, on behalf of the club, that this submission has not been submitted by our club for a Torch Award in a previous year.

This submission has not been submitted previously. In fact, this submission is the first submission for a Torch Award by the Congregation B'nai Amoona Men's Club. We also will have representatives at the national convention for the first time.

Part IV. Entry Documentation

Our **Dad & Me with the ECC** event was designed by the Men's Club with four goals in mind:

- 1) To bring younger men into our club whether members of our congregation or not;
- 2) To provide another entry point into our club;
- 3) To facilitate collaboration with another group within the shul; and
- 4) To make an event where kids and dads (and granddads) spend some time together while mom gets a break.

The Men's Club first met with the director of our early childhood center who enthusiastically agreed to the project. The next step involved obtaining names of non-Men's Club ECC dads and asking them to be on the event planning committee. Many ECC dads did volunteer, and with several Men's Club members met a few times at a local restaurant to plan the event. The committee decided to make the event free (joint sponsorship by the ECC and Men's Club), to provide a kid-friendly breakfast, have an activity, and do a craft project that could be given to Mom. It was decided to be held on a Sunday morning when our religious school is in session so that the older siblings are supervised, the dads are free to be with the ECC kids, and the moms have some time off.

The event starts out with breakfast, usually scrambled eggs, hash browns and fresh fruit. This is followed by some singing and dancing led by one of our members. After that we have a craft project for the dads and kids to do together (see pictures below).



The first year the planning committee cut out vinyl picture frames in the shape of a heart from donated rolls of pink and red vinyl. On the day of the event we took digital pictures of the kids and printed them while the kids were eating and singing. The kids then decorated the frames, put their pictures in them and gave them to mom. The second year the planning committee arranged for plastic mugs to be donated to us for the event. The kids put their pictures on them and decorated them.

This event has become one of our premier activities on our calendar and continues to meet our established goals each year. It also remains free, costing our club only about \$150 a year, the ECC donates the supplies, and congregants donate their time to lead the singing and dancing.

The Men's Club believes our sponsorship and participation in this event is time and money very well spent. The results, over and above the success of the event itself, have been:

- 1) bringing younger men into our club. In fact, our current Vice President of Activities was one of the ECC dads that joined the Men's Club as a result of this event;
- 2) the spawning of other collaborative events for the congregation in general. For example, the Men's Club and the ECC decided to jointly sponsor a Mother's Day brunch (an event that had languished for years on the general congregations activity list) as a direct result of the success of Dad & Me & the ECC. These two groups also have jointly sponsored a live music event and family dinner evening since the advent of our initial successful collaboration;
- 3) collaboration with other groups within the shul, which also has added younger members to the Men's Club. An example of which is a recent bowling evening with the Sisterhood;
- 4) that the addition of new members benefits our main mission which is a summer camp scholarship fund funded in large part by our entire Men's Club membership.