

**Application for Chapter of Excellence and Mel Goldman Award  
Sharon USY  
2011-2012**

*Events that are new for this year have been italicized.*

**A. This year's program calendar. (Please see attached – Programs have been color-coded based on category and labeled as Kadima, Junior, and or Senior USY)**

**B. Leadership:**

- Elections – At the end of every year Sharon USY holds chapter elections so that as a chapter we can select the people who we believe will be the best leaders for our chapter. Elections this year will be held on May 21<sup>st</sup>, one week after Spring Convention. A member in good standing, who is at least in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, can run for one of five board positions; Religious/Education Vice-President, Israel Affairs/Programming Vice-President, Social Actions/Tikun Olam Vice-President, Membership/Kadima Vice-President, and Communications Vice-President. Two Communications Vice-Presidents will be elected. In order to run for president, the candidate must be a member in good standing of Sharon USY, who has also been on chapter Executive board for one year or chapter general board for two years. Anyone who is interested or who was not elected to the chapter executive board is eligible to apply for the general board. The President and the Youth Director assign the chapter general board positions.
- Constitutional Updates – One of the jobs of the President of our chapter is to update the Constitution as necessary. When, either the president or a member in good standing proposes an addition or change to the constitution a full chapter board meeting is held (the executive board and the chapter general board). A member proposes the amendment and then a discussion is held with the board to decide whether or not the amendment is needed or worded correctly. In order for an amendment to pass it must be voted on and gain a two-thirds majority vote by the board. Constitutional updates occur several times throughout the year. This year, we updated our constitution to reflect a needed change in case a member of the executive board must take an extended leave of absence. We also added in clauses to add an additional youth group for next year, not USY affiliated, for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders.
- Office Hours – Chapter executive board officers are required to hold office hours once a week. They are expected to come into the USY lounge for at least one hour a week to work on various projects. Examples include: event planning, database updates, membership outreach phone calls,

meetings with their general board, etc. With the exception of meetings with their general board, this time is one on one time with the Youth director so that they have time to work on specific goals.

- Board Bonding – The executive board gets together approximately three times per year to work on communication, cooperation, and listening, as well as to plan events and work on upcoming projects. Our first board bonding this year was a sleepover before Freshman Kidnap which also gave the teens an opportunity to get to know Stacy, the new youth director. For our second meeting, we had dinner at Stacy's house and reviewed high holidays, played games, and figured out what we needed to change for religious holiday services going forward. Our final board bonding was dinner and tie-dying at Stacy's house. We worked on our banner for Spring Convention and planned our end of the year activities.
- Banquet – Our year ended last year with a banquet that gave out various awards for people's achievements, inaugurated the new board, and encouraged membership and leadership involvement from the rest of the chapter.
- Junior Congregation/Religious School: Members of the USY board and general group work in the Religious School's Junior Congregation leading services, and serving as role models for the younger students. They also volunteer their time in the religious school classrooms helping out as necessary.
- Meetings – Executive Board and General Board meetings are held twice monthly. They give the board members a chance to work on projects together, plan future events, and meet individually as groups (SATO, Religion/Education, etc.). The SATO committee met numerous times in addition to this to organize the Purim Carnival.

### **C. Religion/Education**

- Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur Services – On both days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Sharon USY holds services for all youth from 6<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. All parts of the services are led by USYers, including a d'var, Shofar blowing, and Torah reading. There were approximately 75 people per day.
- *Jo Ho and Shai Present: Lounge or Genocide Awareness Lounge – Jonathan Horowitz and Shai Berk, two seniors and members of Sharon USY, gave a presentation and led a discussion about genocide around the world. This lounge took place on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012 and around fifteen people attended. The event was free.*

- Kabbalat Shabbat – Once a month, USYers get together with the synagogues minyan and take charge of leading the service. USYers lead both Kabbalat Shabbat and Maariv, and then after services everyone enjoys dinner and a long, rowdy Ruach session.
- Starbucks Schmooze - Twice a month Sharon USYers and a rabbi from the local Ko-El meet at Starbucks to drink free coffee and discuss issues prevalent to Jewish teens. We have discussed many issues from Jewish ethics, Jewish identity, holidays, and other issues relevant to teens.
- *Chocolate Seder – This year, our Kadamanicks had their first annual chocolate seder. After religious school, 20 kadimanicks stayed to have a full seder using only chocolate! They got to learn about Passover and eat candy at the same time.*
- Sukkah Decorating – This year, all of USY along with the younger religious school students and pre-schoolers got together for a few hours to make sukkah decorations and eat ice cream.
- Simchat Torah Skits – Each year, USYers perform humorous skits during the Haftorah reading. This year theme was “I love the 90’s” and USYers silently performed their skits about their favorite things from the 90’s.
- USY Shabbat – This year’s USY Shabbat took place on February 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>. USYers led both the evening and morning services and read Torah on Saturday. After the morning service, everyone stayed for learning sessions and Chofesh.
- *Chametz Hunt – For the first time, we chose not to close the lounge for Passover. In fact, we even had a lounge during Passover. In order to make this happen, we had to clean the lounge. USYers got together for two afternoons to clean every corner of the lounge and do bedikat chametz together. This was both a fun event and a learning experience for USYers who don’t necessarily take all these steps at home.*
- *Ruach Lounge – We began to notice that not everyone knew all of the songs at Kab Shab. So therefore, we decided to offer a lounge, led by our Rel/Ed Sarah Binney, that gave people a chance to learn the songs. We sang for two hours, ate snacks, and had a great time.*
- *Tu B’Shevat Lounge – In the spirit of Tu B’Shevat, our Junior USYers and Kadimanicks had a lounge for Tu B’Shevat. They played games where they made themselves into edible seder plates, then played Treevial Pursuit. This game taught them and quizzed them on fun facts about USY.*

#### **D. Cultural/Israel:**

- Israel Lounge – Solomon Tarlin, the Sharon USY Israel Affairs/Programming Vice President, lead a discussion about certain issues that are prevalent to modern Israeli life, including the Settlement/Border issue, Gilad Shalit's release, and the recent democratic uprisings in the countries surrounding Israel. There were twelve kids in attendance and the lounge took place on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2012.
- Yom Haatzmaut Party – Sharon USYers are coming together with the Religious School and Hazaak, our senior citizens group, for Israeli themed dinner and dancing. This event will take place on April 26, 2012.
- On January 19<sup>th</sup>, USY co-sponsored an event with the Brotherhood where Yossi Katz, an Israel educator, came to speak to our congregation about his book, Stories of Jewish Heroism. USYers at this event introduced Yossi and help to run the event. There were also a number of USYers in attendance.
- Purim Prep Lounge – USYers got together to make costumes, masks and prepare for the Purim Carnival.
- Purim Carnival -- This event is led, run, and planned entirely by our Junior and Senior USYers.
- Pizza in the Hut – This year all three youth groups got together for pizza and movie in the Sukkah. We watched Despicable Me after sharing a meal together, and shaking the Lulav and Etrog in our synagogues Sukkah!
- Latke Lounge – This event was a fun time during Chanukah for all of our USY groups. We had trivia, dinner (Israeli food), Syrians vs. Maccabees Capture the Flag, and homemade sufganyot cupcakes. We also lit the candles together and sang Chanukah songs. Interestingly enough, our homemade Lego menorah fell apart completely while we were bringing it up from the lounge, and five of our Senior USY boys were able to put it back together just before candle lighting– it was our own little Chanukah miracle.
- *10 Plagues Scavenger Hunt – Our Rel/Ed VP Sarah Binney, planned a lounge for Passover. Two teams (boys vs. girls) ran around the*

*synagogue trying to find as many of the 10 plagues as they could with clues that Sarah had carefully laid out for them.*

#### **E. Recreation Sports:**

- Laser Tag Lock-in – Junior and Senior USYers from Sharon USY, Temple Reyim USY, and Natick USY came together for a night of laser tag fun! Sharon USY brought 30 kids to participate not only in the laser-tag goodness, but the arcade and bungee run as well. We slept over at the laser tag place, and got to stay up almost all night. The Tikun Olam Semiformal promo video was also filmed at this event.
- Skyzone – All of our youth groups have had events at Skyzone this year. This event is a huge draw for our members and we often have to turn people away. Skyzone is an amazing indoor trampoline park. The kids were allowed to just bounce around or challenge their friends to an epic game of trampoline dodge ball.
- Museum of Science/Imax – Senior USY kicked off their year at the Museum of Science and got to see an Imax.
- Monster Mini-Golf – Kadima’s apple picking event was cancelled because so many trees were destroyed by Hurricane Irene. Instead, they went to our local monster mini-golf and had a great time with each other. They even got to enjoy ice cream sundaes.
- Regional Events – Our USYers have gone to many regional events including dances hosted by other chapters.
- Rock Climbing with Peabody – In November, we went to Metrorock with Peabody USY for our first inter-chapter event of the year. 11 kids from Sharon and 8 kids from Peabody learned how to belay and climbed for hours at Metrorock!
- Mega Maze (see description in Membership outreach)
- Ice Skating – Before International Convention, all of our youth groups got together to go ice skating in Providence. This event had a great mix of kids from all three youth groups, and was a wonderful chance for our younger and older kids to bond!
- 5 Wits – Kadima and Junior USY went to 5 Wits this year. Although they went in two separate groups (one went to 20,000 leagues, and

one went to Espionage) everyone got ice cream cake and had a great time!

- *SUSY Pack the Place and Team Dinner – Our basketball players and USYers were having a hard time having events that everyone enjoyed. So, we invited the USYers to go to a SUSY basketball game against Needham. 15 USYers came to cheer on their friends. Then, everyone went to Taam China for dinner. This event even gave us the opportunity to convince some of the basketball players to go to TO Semi Formal.*
- *Museum of Science Sleepover – We wanted to do something big for Kadima over February break. So on the first Sunday of break, kids from Sharon and Brockton got together for a slumber party at the museum of science. We can't wait to go back next year!*
- *Boston Adventure – Junior USY was jealous that Kadima got a February break event, so they wanted one too. 15 Junior USYers took the train into Boston with Stacy, and 4 Senior USYers. Everyone then split off into groups and did a scavenger hunt at the Prudential Center. The hunt ended at Cold Stone and we all enjoyed some delicious ice cream!*
- *Snow Tubing – Although the Superbowl meant Junior USY couldn't go snow tubing on February 5<sup>th</sup>, it gave Junior and Senior USY a chance to do an event together. At the end of February break both groups came together at Nashoba Valley. Even though there wasn't much snow this year, everyone still had fun!*
- *Mystery Bus Ride – This years Mystery Bus took 31 USYers to Dave and Busters in Providence.*
- *New England Aquarium – Kadima and Junior USY went to the aquarium together for one last big joint event!*

## **F. Social Action/Tikkun Olam**

- **Habitat for Humanity -** Each year Sharon USY holds an annual trip to a far-away state to volunteer at Habitat for Humanity; this is a highly regarded program all, and thus it is a success year after year! This year, we are traveling to Punta Gordo Florida to build homes with our group of twelve volunteers and two staff members. Our Sharon USYers are so committed that they are giving up their April break to make a difference.

- *Un-Birthday Lounge: In October, Kadima and Junior USY got together for Un-Birthday Lounge. It was EVERYONE's birthday and we got a chance to decorate cupcakes and celebrate. Then, we worked together on a SATO project, making goodie bags for Birthday Wishes.*
- *Purim Prizes - This year, for Purim, we purchased a decent amount of new prizes for our carnival, but we were left with a dilemma: what can we possibly do with the older prizes? Our amazing youth director, Stacy Weinberg, thought back to a lounge we hosted for Birthday Wishes, a charity dedicated to giving gifts to kids who wouldn't normally be able to afford them. To make their lives just a little bit better, we decided to package up our prizes, make new birthday bags, and donate them to this fantastic organization.*
- *Purim Carnival - This and every year, we held our annual Purim Carnival which is always a fantastic success. It may be the most stressful time of the year, but more importantly, it is the most rewarding. This year, we succeeded at collecting \$13,000 for programming and TO via mischloach manot and the carnival itself. After the carnival, we got our entire temple community involved via the Purim Schpeil!*
- *Upcycling - This year we began a new program to collect funds for TO: upcycle technology collected from the Sharon USY, the Hebrew School, and our community at large. Via the organization of Causes International, we were able to save hundreds of items from being sent to landfills and we made roughly \$273 for TO in the process. It was a win: win for Sharon USY and the environment!*
- *Mount Monadnock Hike – In October, Senior USYers gave \$5 and hiked Mount Monadnock with the Brotherhood. This was a chance to bond with other groups in the synagogue, have fun, and raise money for SATO.*
- *The Lorax/SATO Day – Kadima and Junior USY worked on SATO projects in Religious school and then went to see the Lorax in 3D*
- *Sharon USY T-Shirts: This year we designed t-shirts and sold them to all youth groups. The proceeds (\$100) went directly into our SATO fund.*
- *TO Semi Formal – Sharon hosted TO Semi This year. By charging our members slightly above the base cost, we were able to raise additional money for SATO. Members also planned an Oscar theme and came to help set up and decorate to make sure everyone had a great time!*

## **G. Membership Outreach/Retention:**

- Welcome to Kadima Lounge – On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, Kadimaniks came to Temple Israel to participate in a get to know you style lounge. There were several senior USYer's there to facilitate the activities. 15 Kadimaniks and 3 senior USYer's were present.
- USY Big/Little Mega Maze - On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2011, 30 kadimanicks, junior and senior USYer's went to Davis Megamaze. Every three or four juniors were paired with a Senior USYer to complete the maze with as a "big brother/big sister" program.
- Freshman Kidnap – In August, we kidnapped the upcoming freshman class and brought them to Ihop for breakfast. Afterwards, everyone went to Griffen Park to play team building games. This event helped us get a huge amount of freshman active who have not been active before! It was great to get kids involved so early.
- Welcome Back Lounge Junior and Senior – These lounges were social events that gave people a chance to come back after the summer and see their old friends, and make new ones.
- Step-Up Events—Each year at the end of the year, we invite the rising younger class to attend an event with the older group so they can get a taste of what it's like. This year, the 8<sup>th</sup> graders are invited to our Road Rally on May 6<sup>th</sup>, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders are invited to join us for a Laser Tag Showdown with Brockton on May 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Lounge—Twice a month for Senior USY and once a month for Junior USY and Kadima, USYers get together in the lounge to hang out, discuss topics, watch movies or play games. Most lounges have a theme, and we alternate between one serious/educational topic (Ruach Lounge, Genocide Awareness Lounge, Israel Lounge, etc) and more casual fun lounges (Harry Potter Lounge, Pajama and Cheesecake Lounge, Decorate Stacy's Office Lounge, Indoor Campfire Lounge, etc).

## **H. Communication:**

- *Constant Contact – This year, we set up online payment for events through Constant Contact. This gave us a website to host event and chapter information, as well as allow our members pay online. Parents and kids alike loved having the chance to see what was going on, and pay right away for events!*

- Facebook Event Pages – Every Senior USY event has a facebook event page that is monitored and observed by our Communications Vice-Presidents, members can invite friends to events, and post comments about the events.
- TO Semi Promo Video – Once again we had our annual TO Semi Promo Video. This video was posted on youtube and distributed to our chapter via email. The video can be seen at [bit.ly/tosemipromo](http://bit.ly/tosemipromo).
- Email Newsletter – Each month we send out all of our Chapter events in an email newsletter. Occasionally we will have SATO tips or advice in our emails as well. These emails also provide links to download response cards and pay online. About 50% of our members read and respond to our emails.
- Postcards/Response Cards – We've been mailing hard copies of postcards for years, as about 50% of our members prefer to receive a paper mailing. This year, to make it easier for our members, we offered them the chance to detach a response card and mail it back to us checking off what events they wanted to attend that month. This made it much easier, and got us a lot more RSVPs for events!
- Email Reminders – Each week an email reminder goes out with all the upcoming information for events, including deadlines, payment information, and any changes in details for the events. This always goes out in email format and generally gets a very good response.
- Luach—The Luach is our synagogues newsletter. USY has its own page and the congregation is able to see what is going on with our groups, what is upcoming, and areas we might need help. This year we also used the pages to ask people to donate to support our lounges and help keep that a free program.
- Weekly Email Blast – We also post our information in the synagogue email blast so the congregation can see that as well. This information goes directly to our synagogues main website.
- Facebook – We have multiple facebook groups: executive board, general board, and general Sharon USY group. These groups maintain all sites with update information, and allow our members to chat, socialize, and plan upcoming events.