

## 2013–2015 Torch Awards - Application

**Before you submit this application, please print out and review the "2015 Torch Awards Overview," available on the FJMC website.**

Please complete the following information. The font for all submissions should be Times New Roman. Please embed photographs of your program into this file. This completed document will be submitted to us as a Word file, named in the format: "FJMC TA 2015\_ChapterName\_ProgramName.doc"

Please email your completed application to: [torchaward.fjmc.2015@gmail.com](mailto:torchaward.fjmc.2015@gmail.com). If you have difficulty, please contact the Torch Award Co-Chairs for assistance at the above email address.

Clubs participating must be in good standing as of March 31, 2015 (Club dues and Membership list received by FJMC). Programs to be considered for an award must have taken place between April 1, 2013 and April 15, 2015. Entries must be received by April 22, 2015.

### Section 1: Title

Club Name: Congregation Beth Emeth Men's Club  
Current Contact: Gabe Taraday  
Program Name: Bringing Aaron Moses of the Abayudaya to Convention

### Section 2: Contact information

Person completing form

First Name: Gabe  
Last Name: Taraday  
E-Mail: [dcgabe@gmail.com](mailto:dcgabe@gmail.com)

Club President at time of Convention

First Name: Dan  
Last Name: Moldover  
E-Mail: [danm@moldover.net](mailto:danm@moldover.net)

Current Club President

First Name: Dan  
Last Name: Moldover  
E-Mail: [danm@moldover.net](mailto:danm@moldover.net)

### Section 3: Category

## 2013–2015 Torch Awards - Application

Please choose up to two (2) selections. Please note, you can only win in one category. The co-chairs reserve the right to reclassify your program.

- Club Administration
- Community Outreach
- XFJMC Other
- Fundraising
- Health and Wellness
- Hearing Men’s Voices
- Jewish Observance
- Israel / Masorti
- Keruv
- Men's Club Shabbat
- Programming for Younger Men
- Shomrei Ha’aretz
- Synagogue Service Project
- World Wide Wrap
- Youth Programming
- Shoah Yellow Candle
- I’m not sure, select for our club
- Best Overall Activities** \*\*To apply for this award, please see specific instructions in “2015 Torch Award Overview,” available on FJMC website\*\*

### Section 4: Program overview

Brief Summary – Seaboard 1<sup>st</sup> VP Bruce Gordon called Gabe Taraday to step in and befriend Aaron Moses of the Abayudaya of Uganda, register himself for convention, and take the steps necessary to bring Aaron to convention. Through a series of email and Skype conversations with Aaron and coordination with Bruce, we were able to access Rabbi Simon’s and Seaboard Region FJMC resources to bring Aaron to Engage! 2015 FJMC Biennial Convention, Deauville Beach Resort, Miami Beach, FL. Attending convention will enable Aaron to obtain valuable knowledge and additional contacts in order to pursue his goal of establishing an official FJMC chapter in Uganda. Aaron is scheduled to speak to the whole convention on Friday night, July 10.

Detailed Summary - Please answer the following questions. Be as detailed as possible.

- What were the goals of your program? Are there specific problems or challenges that it addresses?

## 2013–2015 Torch Awards - Application

- The primary goals were: 1) develop a relationship with Aaron Moses; 2) invite him to the FJMC Biennial Convention and have him accept; 3) determine what was needed to get him there; and 4) access the resources needed for travel arrangements, funding, getting a visa, etc. and implement these to bring Aaron to convention. If possible: 5) find ways for Aaron Moses to further communicate his background and the heritage of the Abayudaya; and 6) cultivate the knowledge and contacts gained at convention in order to develop a plan to establish an official FJMC chapter for the Abayudaya in Uganda.
- How does your program enhance the image of FJMC, your region, and your club?
- This program enhances the FJMC by broadening its influence to the continent of Africa and demonstrating its commitment to supporting nascent men's clubs internationally. It has enhanced Seaboard Region FJMC by showing it can seize an FJMC International initiative and utilize region resources in both human and financial capital to drive a concept into action. It enhances the Beth Emeth Men's Club image for being willing to accept a challenge and meet it. It is a shining example of international, region and club partnership and teamwork to create value and propel the FJMC movement into new growth.
- What is its value in building or strengthening your club?
- It demonstrates to the club how we are part of not just a larger picture in the region, but internationally. It shows how our local activity can create value for the entire FJMC and the Masorti Movement. It also shows our club the value of its association with the region and the larger FJMC.
- Who is your target audience? (i.e. congregation at large, chapter, community)?
- Our principal target is the entire 2015 FJMC Biennial Convention. However, it is anticipated this program will reverberate throughout all levels of Conservative Judaism.
- How does your program support FJMC's mission, Involving Jewish Men in Jewish Life?
- This program is by definition an expression of Jewish Men Involved in Jewish Life. Jewish Men at the club, region and international levels all have combined their efforts to empower a distant group of Jewish Men (from the Abayudaya of Uganda) to join them and for us to learn from one another. As Aaron Moses said, the Abayudaya have women's groups but there are lacking a fully functional organization for the men of the community.
- Describe the source of your program and its unique aspects. Is this an original program or an adaptation or enhancement of a previous program (if so, which one)?
- This is an original program. It started with former FJMC International Vice President and Hearing Men's Voices Leader Art Spar developing a contact with the Abayudaya of Uganda. Art contacted his friend and cohort Bruce Gordon of Seaboard to identify a club within the region to create a joint Hearing Men's Voices Program between the club and the Abayudaya. As Seaboard Region FJMC Convention Chair, Bruce saw this as a vehicle to create value for the entire FJMC through it culminating with the Abayudaya Men's Club Leader Aaron Moses attending convention. Bruce contacted Beth El of Montgomery County, which has the most expansive HMV program in Seaboard. Club President Jordan Rosner initiated Skype contact with Aaron Moses. When it became clear that neither Jordan or any other key members of the club would attend convention, Jordan graciously cooperated with Bruce who enrolled me as the liaison to make this happen. I was excited for the opportunity and have been impressed by Aaron Moses. He gives me confidence that

## 2013–2015 Torch Awards - Application

this initiative can be the launching pad for greater involvement by the Abayudaya men and stronger alliance between the Abayudaya and the FJMC.

- Please attach planning and marketing materials, as well as budgetary planning so the program can be replicated by other clubs.

## 2013–2015 Torch Awards - Application

### MOSES OF UGANDA

Aaron Kintu Moses performs weddings, ministers to the sick, and teaches in a Jewish school. Sound like the typical rabbi? Well, what if your pulpit was in the bush of Uganda?

Story by E. B. Solomont | Photo by Chaya Weinstein



**OPEN TEXT.** ON HIS FIRST TRIP TO AMERICA THIS FALL, Ugandan Jewish educator Aaron Kintu Moses became something of a one-man public relations phenomenon. Hailed by local rabbis and synagogue sisterhoods, he tirelessly criss-crossed the country from Massachusetts to California to Wisconsin and back to raise awareness about the very existence of his home community in Uganda. As headmaster of the Abayudaya Primary School, the local Jewish elementary school, Aaron came bearing stories and fundraising items, not the least of which was himself: a flesh and blood member of Uganda's Jewish community.

After more than a dozen lectures in as many cities, he landed in Wayne, N.J., his final stop on the tour. I caught up with him there, the day after his lecture at Congregation Shomrei Torah, where congregants crowded around him after a prayer service and wished him well. Wearing a mustard-colored dress shirt and gray slacks under a black windbreaker, Aaron did not remove his jacket inside the synagogue. With a quick smile and an easy laugh, he reminded me that East Africa's tropical climate is considerably warmer than here. Outside, it couldn't have been more than 35 degrees Fahrenheit.

It's not the only difference between the countries, not by a long shot, although Aaron's mission over the past month has been to garner American Jewish support to sustain the projects of its Ugandan counterparts. (That is to say, all 753 Ugandan Jews, including Aaron's two-month-old baby.)

It's a critical mission. "We are actually trying to fight isolation, which we have been living in for a long, long time," he tells me. At this point, I admit I'm a novice when it comes to Ugandan Jews. "Ah yeah," he says, knowingly. "That's why I came."

As the face of the Ugandan Jewish community, Aaron himself says he followed the footsteps of his father, who served as a spiritual leader in Abayudaya (Ugandan for "Children of Israel"), until his death in 1986. Two decades later, Aaron calls his father one of the biggest influences in his life. Aaron recalls riding to synagogue on the back of his father's bicycle, and singing Jewish songs with him. "He would tell us stories about Israel," Aaron says. "So these stories influenced me to love his ways."

Today, Aaron reflects on the fact that life as a Ugandan Jew is not, and has not, been easy. In a country where more than 80 percent of the population is Christian, Jews have been an extreme minority since the community's inception there in the late 19th century. Currently, the Ugandan government does not recognize Jewish holidays, so government employees who are Jewish must work on those days, Aaron says. Similarly, there are no Jewish representatives to the national government, effectively eliminating their public voice. "They don't treat us badly," he says, but "we don't have much influence. We don't have people in the central government, but we are not oppressed as such."

Historically speaking, it's a familiar role. The Ugandan Jewish community traces its origins to founder Semei Kakungulu, who rejected Christianity brought by missionaries in the 1880s. Instead, he sought Jewish principles he learned in the Old Testament (which the same missionaries also gave him). In 1919, Kakungulu circumcised himself,

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## 2013–2015 Torch Awards - Application

his sons, and a group of followers, practically declaring themselves Jews. Over the next hundred years and counting, community life has ebbed and flowed: faltering after the patriarch Kakungulu's death in 1928, growing to 3,000 members under new leadership, diminishing to 300 during the regime of the dictator Idi Amin, and enjoying an upswing after he was overthrown. Perhaps most significantly, the community was bolstered in 2002 when a panel of Conservative rabbis converted the Ugandans to Judaism, authenticating their Jewish status in the eyes of many (excluding the Israeli government, which only recognizes Orthodox conversions).

Today, Aaron says most Ugandan Jews live in Mbale, himself included. In addition to several synagogues, two schools are the centerpieces of the Abayudaya community. In general, many in Abayudaya are observant, and Aaron tells me his family keeps kosher and observes Shabbat: eating challah, reciting kiddush, attending synagogue. As far as community relations go, the Jewish community — once shunned — has partnered with a Muslim and Christian coffee-producing cooperative. Although it sometimes hinders their ability to observe their Jewish rituals, many who are not subsistence farmers are employed at municipal jobs; Aaron himself was a public school teacher in a former life.

It's no stretch to imagine, therefore, that Aaron considers education to be something of a thread of hope: It sustained the Jewish community in Uganda more than a hundred years ago when the community got started, and he hopes it will sustain the community in the future, via Jewish schools. As such, one day six years ago, Aaron quit his public school job. He had no salary, three children to feed and a wife to support — but he says he was fueled by the (until then) foreign concept of a Jewish school. Initially, Aaron attracted no more than 15 students to a small, two-room schoolhouse where the children received Judaic and secular instruction. Today, there are 200 elementary school students, and 260 high schoolers. In fact, the growing student body and a desire to build more dormitories propelled Aaron to the United States this year.

As our meeting winds down, Aaron and I leave the synagogue together; he has been asked to participate in one more study session with local rabbis before flying to Entebbe later that night. He hands me promotional material for the school, pointing out his daughter's smiling face on a postcard. I ask if he gets angry that Israel won't recognize them as Jews. He maintains a calm demeanor. "It should be repealed," he says of the policy. "We are Jews." ■

Source of funds for Aaron Moses' Ugandan Travel:

# 2013-2015 Torch Awards - Application



Pay to the Order Of **You! FJMC Convention Attendee!** \$ **700.00**

Seven Hundred\*\*\*\*\* DOLLARS

*In Hal Freed We Trust* Alex Pomerantz

Non Redeemable for cash. Must be fully registered for the convention to qualify for subsidy. Non-Negotiable

Call me TODAY to find out how you can get \$700.00 towards your conference payment. Offer stands while budget moneys last.

### Conference Highlights

- Venue - Newly Renovated Deauville Beach Resort, Miami Beach
- Training - Improve your club's pursuit of FJMC initiatives
- Fun - Regional caucus (party), International Kiddush Club
- Ruach - Meet Captain Ruach
- Speakers - Noted Authors, Spiritual leaders, Innovators
- More Fun - Aerosmith (Sing like Steven Tyler at the karaoke stand)
- Golf Tournament or Bike Ride or relax
- Post Shabbat at the Beach Saturday afternoon
- Preconvention - Miami Auto Museum, Health & Wealth Seminar
- See old friends and make new ones

Announcing the site & dates for

## Convention 2015

July 8 - 12, 2015  
Deauville Beach Resort  
Miami Beach, Florida



**Awards:**  
President's  
Ma'asim Tovim  
Torch &  
Quality Club

**Huge Program Fair**  
The Cutting Edge  
In the FJMC

Visit [www.fjmc.org](http://www.fjmc.org) to learn more  
Contact Bruce Gordon, Convention Chair to learn more  
[bgordon@mortgagemaster.com](mailto:bgordon@mortgagemaster.com); 703-855-4087

Aaron Moses Invitation Letter

## 2013-2015 Torch Awards - Application



April 30, 2015

Mr. Aaron Moses  
Mbale, Uganda

Re.: Aaron Moses

To Aaron:

It is with great pleasure that I formally invite you to the biennial Federation of Jewish Men's Club's (FJMC) International Convention in Miami Beach, Florida. We are very excited to have you represent the Abayudaya of Uganda, its Jewish community. You are scheduled to address the entire convention Friday night before an audience of more than 400 leaders from throughout the North and South America, and now Africa.

The International FJMC has arranged for your air travel; you should have received your flight information by now. We have already arranged for his convention registration, of which I am proud to say that the Seaboard Region FJMC is a principal sponsor. It is our intention to empower you with ideas and methods to vitalize the Abayudaya Jewish community. We expect that you will vitalize us even more.

Furthermore, plans are being formed for you to speak at Beth Torah Congregation in Miami Beach. As you can see, you are in high demand.

Should you or anyone else have any questions or concerns about your participation at the International FJMC Convention please contact me. Here is a link so that you may learn more about this event and share it with others.

<http://fjmc.org/content/convention-2015>

I am looking forward to seeing you soon.

Best regards,



Bruce Gordon  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, President Elect

Office of Bruce Gordon

3924 Millcreek Drive, Annandale, Virginia 22003

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## 2013-2015 Torch Awards - Application

Program Planning / Timeline - Please provide a timeline of the key tasks, participants, and responsibilities required in order to make this program work. This may be provided as an inserted table or you may replace and insert as an embedded Excel spreadsheet. Please be as detailed as possible, so that other groups may replicate your success.

Timelines for Bringing Aaron Moses to Convention		
Task	Committee Assignment	Due Date
Identify a partner to establish a relationship with Aaron Moses and the Abayudaya	Art Spar	15-Sep-14
Identify a Seaboard club to establish a relationship with Aaron Moses et al	Bruce Gordon	30-Sep-14
Develop relationship with Aaron Moses via Skype	Jordan Rosner	October 2014 through February 2015
Register for convention	Jordan Rosner	27-Feb-15
Communicate with Bruce Gordon and Art Spar about Progress	Jordan Rosner	27-Feb-15
Regroup when initial club does not register for convention	Bruce Gordon	1-Mar-15
Contact Gabe Taraday of Congregation Beth Emeth Men's Club	Bruce Gordon	1-Mar-15
Re-initiate contact with Aaron Moses through email then Skype	Gabe Taraday	March through July 2015
Securing Flight for Aaron Moses	Rabbi Simon	10-Apr-15
Securing Convention Registration for Aaron Moses	Rabbi Simon/Mark Drury	
Determine Aaron's Needs for Getting to Convention	Gabe Taraday	Apr-15
Provision of Funding for Intra Country Travel for Getting Visa	Bruce Gordon	21-Apr-15
Providing Aaron Moses with Invitation Lettet to Get Visa	Gabe/Bruce	29-Apr-15
Securing Aaron Moses Biography as a Convention Speaker	Rich Berger	30-Apr-15
Wired funds to Aaron Moses in Uganda for Travel Needs	Jeremy Kasman	7-May-15
Continued Skype communication with Aaron Moses until convention	Gabe Taraday	May - July 2015

### Section 5: Certification

**I certify that my club has not won a Gold Torch Award for essentially the same program in a previous year.** (Previous silver and bronze winners in this category that submit an enhanced application only qualify to be considered for a Gold Torch award.)

Certification: Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 6: Pictures

For all non-Shabbat programs, please attach photographs of your program.

## 2013–2015 Torch Awards - Application

### Section 7: Video

If possible, we ask that you please create a 3-5 minute video describing your program. Feel free to be creative in your submission, but try to include the following components:

- brief introduction, including name and goal of the program
- how did you encourage participation in the program
- how did you make the program meaningful to participants
- impact of the program to your club, synagogue and community

**DO NOT ATTACH VIDEO TO THIS APPLICATION.** Files are to be uploaded directly to YouTube, named in the following format:

“FJMC Torch Awards 2015\_ChapterName\_ProgramName\_#”

Please review detailed instructions in the document “2015 Torch Award Overview.”

**\*\*REPLACE/INSERT YOUR VIDEO URL(S) HERE\*\***