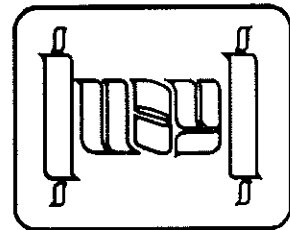


USY OFFICER PACKET:

President

The *USY Officer Packets* are a project of
The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism,
Department of Youth Activities

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INTRODUCTION

As a chapter president, you hold the single most important role in USY. The next year will be a difficult and yet incredibly rewarding experience. To make your life somewhat easier, this packet has been compiled. Please be sure to use it wisely and do not hesitate to add to it.

Being a chapter president is a tremendous responsibility. It is you who executes programs, coordinates board meetings, and provides a positive social environment for Conservative Jewish teenagers. This packet will help you achieve your goals, so that you can leave a lasting impact on USYers in your community. You are responsible for everything that goes on in your chapter, with guidance from your advisor and support from your executive members.

You must always remember why you are taking on this huge task. It is because you want to influence other Conservative Jewish teenagers. You are developing leaders when delegating authority; you are raising money for Tikun Olam; you are helping teenagers connect with Conservative Judaism. And you are being their role model. You have the potential to change people's lives, by making them more involved with their Jewish community.

Right now, all the materials in this booklet are on paper. It is up to you to utilize it well. When your term concludes, pass it down to the next President, so that he/she can take advantage of its contents.

I want to thank former International USY Presidents David Bianco (1989) and Joshua Kaplan (1998), as I developed their previous versions of the Chapter President's Packets. As well, aspects of Gabe Berkowitz's (Lanasi Chairperson, 2002) Guide to Being a Chapter President were used in this handbook.

I also want to thank Jules Gutin, who prompted me to compile this packet, and served as the main editor. Thank you Sean Chizzik, the 2003 Lanasi chairperson, for editing this as well.

B'hatzlacha, good luck,

David Goldberg

ORIGINS OF USY

The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 transpired as a miraculous series of events. However, the Western Jewish community was not in a healthy condition. During these times when North American Jewish identity seemed fully dependent on the existence of Israel, 150 young people representing Omaha, Lincoln, Kansas City, St. Paul, and Minneapolis united under the auspices of United Synagogue of America in St. Paul, Minnesota, to discuss "The Synagogue and the Teenager". At the end of the sessions, they voted to form a permanent Midwest Region Youth Conference that would hold semi-annual meetings. So, United Synagogue Youth was born, and the first chapter was at Beth El Synagogue in Minneapolis.

Almost simultaneously, the idea to form a national youth movement affiliated with United Synagogue of America was being discussed in New York. On March 15th, 1951, the United Synagogue Youth Commission adopted the following proposal: "The Youth Commission unanimously agrees that the teen-age groups come under the general supervision of the Youth Commission. Teen-age groups should include boys and girls of high school level, 13 to 17 inclusive... The Youth Commission shall concern itself with non-scholastic work for teen-agers". They called for the first national Charter Convention for United Synagogue Youth in December of 1951.

The National Charter Convention of USY occurred from December 25-27 in New York City at Columbia University. Over 500 delegates representing 65 communities across North America attended the conference. Paul Freedman of Connecticut was elected as the first National President of USY at the Charter Convention. The two basic documents of the organization, the Aims and Objectives, and the Constitution were adopted.

Soon after, in 1964, Kadima was formalized as a separate entity for pre-USY age youth.

Eventually, this small youth group expanded into the 13,000 member international movement, along with 10,000 Kadima members, that it is today.

WHAT IS USY?

USY starts with an organization called the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ). USCJ is the overseeing organization of Conservative synagogues across North America. United Synagogue Youth and Kadima are the official youth branches of USCJ. This means that USY chapters can only exist in United Synagogue congregations.

USY was conceived as a means of meeting the social, educational, religious, and recreational need of Conservative Jewish youth. Furthermore, USY is a Zionist organization, trying to strengthen the relationship between Israel and our members in North America. USY seeks to involve the youth in synagogue life and help to build the future Jewish community. One measure of our success is that we have produced our own

leaders, as many advisors, youth workers, rabbis, synagogue presidents, etc... are themselves former USYers.

THE STRUCTURE OF USY

Chapters: USY begins on the chapter level: they are the heart of USY. Every USY member joins through a chapter, which acts as the day-to-day activity of our organization. Chapters range in size from 5 to 200 members in size.

Sub-regions: Some larger regions, such as METNY (Metropolitan New York) and Hanegev (Southeast), divide up their regions into smaller geographic areas called sub-regions, or divisions. They tend to function like regions, with their own programming.

Regions: A region is a geographic area that encompasses many different chapters. They have their own executive and general boards. Events include weekend conventions and other activities. The 17 regions range in size from 200 to 2000 members.

International: This encompasses approximately 13,000 members from 17 regions across the United States and Canada. In addition to the Central Office staff, there are 6 International Executive officers, along with approximately 20 General Board members.

USY CLUBS AND PUBLICATIONS

USY provides many special clubs and publications. The list below does not include the countless sourcebooks and pamphlets that have been produced over the years.

CLUBS

ISRAEL AFFAIRS- Hechalutzim: Membership for Hechalutzim costs \$10/year. Members receive Hechalutzon, the Israel newsletter, and they have a late-night activity at International Convention. Additionally, there is an annual Chalutzim Seminar in Israel, where a representative from each region goes to Israel and participates in leadership programming. There are often programs for Chalutzim members regionally. There is also a listserv, Hechalutzim@uscj.org, that provides Israel-related discussion. Membership costs \$10. Visit the website at <http://www.usy.org/yourusy/israel/hechalutzim/>.

RELIGION/EDUCATION - Abraham Joshua Heschel Honor Society: This USY club is devoted to study (*Torah*), Jewish living (*avodah*), and community service (*g'milut chassadim*). In addition to receiving the society's newsletter, Bo'er Ba'esh, members can participate in a late-night study

session at International Convention. Additionally, there is an International Abraham Joshua Heschel Honor Society Kinnus every year in March. There is also a listserve, USY-Reled@uscj.org, that provides religious discussion. Membership is free, but you must meet the standards that reflect the society's goals. Visit the website at <http://www.usy.org/yourusy/reled/heschel/>.

SOCIAL ACTION/TIKUN OLAM- 613 Mitzvah Corps: This USY club is dedicated to social action and raising funds for Tikun Olam, USY's tzedakah fund. In addition to receiving materials about social action and TO fundraising, members receive Eit La'asot, the club's newspaper. Membership costs \$6.13 for a year, and \$61.30 for life.

UDAFE: USYers for a Drug and Alcohol Free Environment (UDAFE) is a relatively new club. USYer can join on the condition that they pledge to refrain from the illegal use of drugs and alcohol. It is a club that signifies how all USYers, not only Board members who agree to USY's standards, are against substance abuse.

Visit the website at <http://www.usy.org/yourusy/sato/clubs.asp>.

PUBLICATIONS

ACHSHAV! – This is USY's quarterly magazine. It includes messages from the International USY Director and President, along with articles written by USYers surrounding a central theme.

LANASI- This is your main resource! There is a LaNasi chairperson, who organizes online chats and online newsletters.

SHALHEVET – This is USY's annual creative arts magazine, that is published annually at International Convention. It contains poems, short compositions, photographs, and other creative works by USYers from all 17 regions.

Visit the website at <http://www.usy.org/yourusy/communications/>.

INTERNATIONAL USY PROGRAMS

USY offers many programs on the International level:

International Convention: Every year, USY visits a different city for International Convention. Locations vary from Toronto to Los Angeles. Approximately 1,200 USYers live in a hotel for five days of sightseeing, learning, social action projects, and more!

Chalutzim Seminar: Every year in February, representatives from each region go to Israel for 10 days, where they pick up tools that they can use about Israel Awareness when they return home.

Abraham Joshua Heschel Honor Society Kinnus: Members of the Honor Society are invited to a convention hosted by a synagogue, where they take part in a weekend filled with study, social action, and learning with your peers.

USY High: USYers can go to the Goldstein Youth Village in Jerusalem for 8 weeks receiving high school credits while having an incredibly unique learning experience.

Nativ: College Leadership Program in Israel: For one year, study at either Hebrew University or the Conservative Yeshiva, with a semester on Kibbutz. This combined with many amazing *tiyyulim* (day trips) makes it an experience like none other!

Summer programs in North America

"Classic" USY on Wheels: For 6 and a half weeks, USYers travel across North America in a bus tour filled with incredible sights and experiences. It is a unique experience, and they have the opportunity to learn how to live as a Jew anywhere.

USY on Wheels: Mission Mitzvah: While incorporating the same experiences as Wheels, this trip offers an intensive social action theme throughout the trip. USYers work on social action projects in most cities that they visit.

Summer in the City: USYers spend four weeks living in New York City, learning at either Barnard College or Columbia University and the Jewish Theological Seminary. At night, they live it up in NYC!

Outdoor Adventure- Pacific Northwest: For four weeks, USYers camp, hike, canoe, kayak, and have a totally outdoor experience, while learning about Judaism and nature.

Outdoor Adventure- Costa Rica: For three weeks, USYers participate in a Spanish immersion program while hiking, sight-seeing, and exploring the rainforests of Central America with a Jewish twist.

Summer programs in Europe

European Experience: For four weeks, USYers travel through Italy, France, Spain, and Portugal. From the Eiffel Tower to Euro Disney, to the Canals of Venice, USYers enjoy what these countries have to offer while also visiting Jewish historical sites which capture centuries of Jewish history.

Summer programs in Israel

Israel Pilgrimage: For 6 weeks, enjoy a stimulating tour of Israel, from Masada to the Kotel to the Golan, with some of your new best friends.

Etgar! The Ultimate Israel Challenge: For all people who have been to Israel before, Etgar may be the trip for you! Take Israel to the next level, through activities like working in development towns and hiking from the Jordan to the Mediterranean.

Israel Adventure: For four weeks, have an exciting summer learning about the history and contemporary realities of Judaism and Israel. USYers climb the fortress of Masada, swim in the Kinneret, drink tea in a Bedouin tent, and much more!

Spain/Israel Pilgrimage: USYers spend a week in Madrid, Cordoba, Seville, Granada, and Toledo exploring the great heritage of Spain including many famous philosophers (Maimonides, Ibn Ezra, etc...) and exploring the Jewish roots in Spain.

Poland Seminar/Israel Pilgrimage: For a week, USYers visit Warsaw, Cracow, and Lublin, including the concentration camp sites of Auschwitz, Birkenau, Treblinka, Sobibor and Majdanek. They explore and study the Holocaust and the history of Polish Jewry, followed by five weeks in Israel

Eastern Europe/Israel Pilgrimage: USYers visit Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic for two weeks, learning about the past, present, and future of these extraordinary Jewish communities, and then go to Israel for the remaining four weeks of the trip.

LEADERSHIP

One of your main roles as a Chapter President is being a leader. You must act as an example for other USYers, and be a role model for them. This will require a good amount of effort and sometimes personal sacrifice. You represent your chapter at all times, and you are a reflection of our youth movement. However, at the same time, you should still be yourself; just realize that people may take your actions more seriously.

Below are eight "IN's" to leadership:

INtelligence- You must be aware of what is going on in the chapter.

INtegrity- You must be reliable.

INspiration- There is a famous quotation, "A good leader inspires other men with confidence in him. A great leader inspires them with confidence in themselves." You, as a chapter president, have the potential to can change a person's work ethic, attitude, and contribution to your chapter.

INterest- Your interest can spread to the membership and board members that surround you.

INitiative- Unless a leader takes the initiative to carry out tasks, the group will lack organization, purpose, and enthusiasm.

INterdependence- You must constantly seek to understand the group dynamic and goals, while encouraging every board member. Interdependence should never be confused with dominance.

INsight- You must continuously contribute to the aims of the group, and be aware of its purpose.

INvention- Be imaginative! Add some spice to your chapter board!

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRESIDENCY

Here are some brief points that are important: as chapter president, you have to:

- Know what's going on, maintaining close communication with your board members
- Divide work- delegate responsibilities to people with: good past experiences, desire to work , ability to work well, stamina to do all work necessary, punctuality, ability to work under and above others, cooperation from family. Always use your best judgment when deciding on who will work together
- Call for reports regularly, so that people will stay on top of everything
- Criticize accurately and constructively- let people know when they are doing a good job, smile as you criticize and include alternate suggestions and a compliment for good effort; criticize in private, when possible. Always comment on the good as well as the bad.
- Don't procrastinate- answer e-mails immediately, return phone calls, otherwise all of the work will pile up
- Be punctual, and demand punctuality from your board members
- Keep records of letters, receipts, and other important information
- Read communication carefully- note deadlines, understand received letters and emails
- Proof-read all materials before printing- ensure that documents convey the message intended, and are grammatically and factually correct
- Give board members ample time to plan events and projects
- Involve younger USYers- train them by assigning them to committees, as they are the chapter's future
- Image- be an example for your membership

- Knowledge- it is important for you, as a leader in the local Jewish community, to be knowledgeable about Judaism. While you do not have to be a Rabbi, you should be involved in Jewish life and have a decent understanding of Judaism
- Dedication- As chapter president, it is your job to fight through the difficult times, despite the frustrations of the job.

DELEGATION

With this in mind, a large part of your task is inspiring your fellow chapter executive members. You are not running a one-person show. They are there to help you, but their job is easier with guidance. Help them do well in their positions, but most importantly, have a lasting impression that will impact their USY training and their future leadership abilities.

Here are some important steps to delegation:

- discuss a course of action for the issue
- let the person describe what they intend to do; they should not act until you approve
- take action: they should let you know what was done, and how it turned out

When delegating, you should ensure that:

- the people you are delegating jobs to are responsible
- explain the job thoroughly
- concentrate on explaining results that you want accomplished
- reach an agreement on the job and the time frame for its accomplishment
- establish a reporting system for problems
- do not use delegation to dump disasters on others
- give positive and negative feedback
- inform others of authority that you have delegated
- recommend sources of help and support
- provide all necessary background information
- do not over-supervise
- ensure that the task "makes sense" to both of you

RUNNING A MEETING

When making a meeting, keep the following in mind:

- give enough notice
- set the meeting at an exact time
- always start on time so that people understand that it is necessary to be prompt
- always set an agenda (sample found below)
- maintain order at meetings- it should be fun, but be sure not to lose focus
- encourage note-taking, so everyone will have their own record of information discussed- this should be in addition to the minutes recorded by the Communications VP, or the secretary
- include everyone- ask for questions and opinions, making sure that everyone speaks
- give everyone the opportunity to run parts of the meeting, to provoke further interest in the issues at hand
- keep meetings at a prescribed length of time

Sample Meeting Agenda

- A. President opens the meeting: "I call this meeting to order at (time)".
- B. Introductions (introduce all those around, if anyone is new... try to bring in guests from the synagogue, like a Rabbi or Cantor, to occasionally sit in on the meetings)
- C. Israel Update (have the Israel Affairs VP deliver an update of what is currently occurring in Israel)
- D. D'var Torah (have the Rel/Ed VP deliver a word of Torah)
- E. Reports from the Chapter President, Advisor/Youth Director, and Committees (Israel Affairs, Rel/Ed, SA/TO, Mem/Kad., etc... so that everyone is aware of what is going on)
- F. Regional events (list upcoming events with dates, and how you are going to promote it)
- G. Past program evaluations (how can you do better for the next program? What was successful? What was not?)
- H. Future programs (list what is upcoming, and describe what each board member's role is)
- I. Plan future calendar
- J. Other Business (was anything not on the agenda that still needs to be discussed?)
- K. Next meeting (When? Where? Who will speak about what issues at the meeting?)
- L. President closes the meeting: "This meeting is adjourned at (time)".

GOALS

- Discuss goals. Make sure people have an idea of what they want to achieve during the year, and help them accomplish their goals. Remember, if you shoot for the moon, you'll at least hit the stars. Have big, wild, and outrageous goals, but at the same time be prepared to reach them.
- Be specific with deadlines and goals. Don't just say that I want to raise Tikun Olam money, say I want to raise \$1000 by the end of the year. Don't say, we should have a program in October, say the deadline for planning the October program is on September 15th.

By setting goals for yourself and your chapter, you are defining what you hope to achieve.

This will help motivate you and keep you on track during your endeavors. Here are some steps to help you with goal-setting:

Determine where you are: Realistically evaluate where you and your chapter stand; where are you strong, and what needs improvement? You can determine this by speaking to your past and present membership and leadership.

Decide where you want to go: Where do you want to lead your chapter? Sit down with you Rabbi, Youth Director, Advisor, Synagogue President, and immediate past Chapter President to discuss what the chapter requires. Then, take this to your board members and move on to the next step.

Design how to accomplish your goals: Talk to your chapter board members, and decide on how you will benefit the chapter. It is time to take action!

Determine whether or not you achieved your goals: You should constantly be thinking about whether or not you are making progress towards your goals. Ask your membership to evaluate programs, and see if you have advanced towards your goals.

BOARD STRUCTURE

Very often, chapters decide that its current system of officers is not meeting its needs. You may want to add a position, drop one, or change the entire system completely. Below is a description of some potential positions for your Executive Board:

President: responsible for overseeing officers, committees, and works closely with the youth director and advisor. He/she is also connected to the region, youth commission, Rabbi, etc...

Executive/Israel Affairs Vice-President: Acts as the primary support of the president, and is also responsible for Israel awareness.

Religion/Education Vice-President: In charge of religious and educational programs, planning services, assigning and delivering *divray torah*, and planning holiday and Shabbat activities.

Social Action/Tikun Olam Vice-President: Oversees social action projects and coordinates fundraising; also recommends the allocation of 40% of Tikun Olam money raised.

Membership/Kadima Vice-President: Responsible for recruiting new members and retaining the old ones. He/she also acts as a liaison with Kadima.

Communications Vice-President: In charge of regalia and the jobs of the secretary.

Programming Vice-President: Responsible for monthly programs, and oversees program chair people to ensure that all aspects of an event are planned.

Secretary: take minutes at meetings, design flyers, and writes any chapter correspondence that is necessary.

Below is a list of potential frameworks for the chapter board:

8 officers: President, Executive/Israel Affairs Vice-President, Rel/Ed VP, SA/TO VP, Mem/Kad VP, Communications VP, Programming VP, Secretary

7 officers: President, Executive/Israel Affairs Vice-President, Rel/Ed VP, SA/TO VP, Mem/Kad VP, Communications VP, Programming VP

6 officers: President, Executive/Israel Affairs Vice-President, Rel/Ed VP, SA/TO VP, Mem/Kad VP, Communications VP

5 officers: President, Executive/Israel Affairs Vice-President, Programming VP, Mem/Kad VP, Communications VP

4 officers: President, Executive Vice-President, Programming VP, Communications VP

RESOURCES

One of the most crucial elements of being a chapter president is to know who to contact at any time. Here is some useful contact information, some of which you need to fill out. If you fill this out and then pass it down to the next Chapter President, it will be far easier for them.

To talk to the Regional President, staff, or fellow chapter presidents:

- Regional USY Office: (phone) _____ (fax) _____
(e-mail) _____
- Regional President: (name & e-mail) _____

- Fellow chapter presidents: (listserv) _____
- Record your fellow Board members phone numbers, for help within the chapter:

Vice-President:

Communications:

Rel/Ed:

Additional position(s):

SA/TO:

Mem/Kad:

- Two of your most important contacts are your Chapter Youth Director and Advisor. They are there to help guide you during the year. You should be in constant communication with the advisor, updating him/her, so that they can help you with the on goings of the chapter:

Chapter Advisor:

Chapter Youth Director:

- You will need to know the contact information for your synagogue leadership, as programs are often planned in affiliation with the synagogue, such as a USY Shabbat. Record the following people's contact information:

Rabbi:

Synagogue Executive Director:

Cantor:

Synagogue President:

- Start making a list of locations that your chapter utilizes for programming. For instance, laser tag, mini-golf, rollerblading, ice skating, and also volunteer locations such as senior citizens homes, soup kitchens, and such.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- USY has a program bank, that provides countless numbers of programs that you can do in your chapter. Check it out at <http://www.usy.org/yourusy/pbank/>
- USY has many source books that you can use in your chapter. You can browse through these at <http://www.usy.org/connect/publications/books.asp>
- If you want to teach a ruach song, but you forget the tune, you can listen to it at <http://www.usy.org/songs/index.php>

WHAT IS LANASI?

Lanasi is the organization for Chapter Presidents. The Lanasi Chairperson coordinates online chats, online newsletters, and discussion on the Lanasi listserv. The purpose of this group is to provide

a place for chapter presidents to e-mail about their problems and assist others with their dilemmas. For more information, contact:

- LANASI Chairperson: lanasi@usy.org

SOME GUIDELINES AND HELPFUL HINTS

- It is very important to have non-business activities. If your board members become better friends, their working relationship can only improve!
- Establish a tradition in your chapter, including regalia, songs, and even programs (BEWARE: make sure that it does not become boring and repetitive, but rather nice and traditional).
- Try to incorporate Judaism into USY programming. At a Saturday night program, do a havdallah service. At a meeting, make sure someone prepares a D'var Torah. Something like this can be a nice emphasis that we are a Jewish youth group.
- When I was Chapter President, my executive and I were worried that people might not come to a Rel/Ed, Israel, or Social Action program. Keep in mind that for these programs, it is not essential how many people attend. The program can be successful with 5 people or 50 people. So, plan Israel-related discussion run by an educator, organize a USY Shabbat, and visit a senior citizens home, because it can be successful regardless of the attendance. A program's success is not based on attendance, but on the planning and fun that people have
- At programs with new members, make sure that they feel welcome... you want them to come back. And you never know... you might make a new friend.
- Remain unified with your Board. While everyone might not agree with each other, ensure that everyone respects each other's opinions.
- Programs in the chapter should be unique and excite the teens in your community. Be creative, and try new things.
- Lead by example: you represent the conservative Jewish youth in your community... so represent them well.
- Always balance your personal life, your school work, and USY business.

ACTIVENESS

You must always be there for your chapter. And that does not mean doing work 24/6. That is ensuring that programs and projects are always happening, and that everyone is doing their job. When there is a time span of little action, people might

give up on attending. Why should they be members of USY, and why should they be involved in a youth group that may have programming once every two months?

As well, you should be at every chapter program (unless there are extreme circumstances). Why should somebody attend chapter programs if the President does not show up?

CONCLUSION

You guys are all so unbelievable! Never forget that. There are always times during the year when you get frustrated and you want to quit... but NEVER, ever give up. By being a chapter president, you are having a positive impact on people's lives... many look up to you as a role model, and are inspired by your passion and dedication to Conservative Judaism. What more can you ask for?

Thanks so much for being you, trying your hardest, and for representing your community of Conservative Jewish teenagers.

"Ay-zehoo chacham? Halomed mikol adam – Who is wise? He who learns from everyone"

- Pirkey Avot 4:1