



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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USY Announces Winners of its 2015 Annual Awards, Including Ruth Messinger as Recipient of Inaugural Abraham Joshua Heschel Society Award and Congregation B'nai Amoona of St. Louis as Chapter of the Year

New Class of Inductees to the Abraham Joshua Heschel Honor Society Also Announced

December 30, 2015—United Synagogue Youth (USY) announced today the winner of its annual awards, including the first-ever Abraham Joshua Heschel Society Award which was given to Ruth Messinger, president of American Jewish World Service (AJWS), for her lifetime of service to humanity through the lens of Jewish values. Messinger was presented with the award after addressing more than 700 teens at USY's 65th Annual International Convention about her activism and social change efforts.

Other awards given out recognized USY chapters and regions that demonstrated excellence across the organization's major areas of focus: social action/tikun olam, religious education, Israel education, driving membership, and communications. Congregation B'nai Amoona in St. Louis, MO was named Chapter of the Year for overall excellence, diversity, creativity, and value of programming. Additional awards were presented to chapters and regions for programming, membership and tikun olam.

“With all the statistics we pointing to the pronounced and ever-increasing shrinkage of participation in youth programs, [the chapter's] steady and consistent flourishing truly serves as a dose of much needed Nachat Ruach, balm for troubled and wounded spirits and souls,” said Rabbi Carnie Shalom Rose of Congregation B'nai Amoona in his recommendation letter.

Award winners were chosen by teen regional presidents and the International Executive Board based upon USY's standards of excellence, while membership and tikun olam awards were based upon largest percentage increases.

Additionally, USY announced a new class of inductees to the Abraham Joshua Heschel Honor Society. Established in 1979 and named for the famed Jewish civil rights leader, the Abraham Joshua Heschel Honor Society encourages USYers to learn more about Judaism and the observance of mitzvot. The

Honor Society's inductees represent a strong commitment to the study of Torah, prayer, and performance of G'milut Chasadim, acts of loving kindness.

A complete list of winners and inductees is below. All the awards and honors were presented at this year's USY 65th Annual International Convention in Baltimore, MD, December 27-31.

Chapter of the Year & Programming Awards

USY's Chapter of the Year- Congregation B'nai Amoona (BAUSY) of St. Louis, MO

Excellence in Communications- Anshe Emet Synagogue's SHMUSY, Chicago, IL

Excellence in Membership/Kadima Performance- City-wide chapter, Motor City USY, Detroit, MI

Excellence in Israel & Overall Programming – Congregation B'nai Amoona's BAUSY, St. Louis, MO

Excellence in Religion/Education – Congregation Ohev Shalom, Wallingford, PA

Excellence in Social Action/Tikun Olam- Congregation Etz Chaim's Sabababa USY, Marietta, GA

Membership & Tikun Olam Awards

Highest total tikun olam donation by any chapter- North Suburban Synagogue, Highland Park, IL with \$7,041.26

Highest total tikun olam donation by any region- Hagalil (New Jersey) with \$28,487.04

Highest per capita tikun olam donation by any region- CHUSY (Chicago area) with \$63.60 per capita

Largest Overall Increase for USY & Kadima Membership- NERUSY (Greater Boston area)

Largest Percentage Increase for USY Membership- New Frontier (Northern California)

Largest Percentage Increase for Kadima Membership- NERUSY (Greater Boston area)

Abraham Joshua Heschel Honor Society 2015 Inductees

California: Bradley Gerber (West Hills), Joshua Horwitz (San Francisco), Ronit Sholkoff (Woodland Hills)

Connecticut: Esther Schlossberg (West Hartford), Michael Stambler (West Hartford)

Florida: Rachel Sandhouse (Coral Springs)

Georgia: Jacq Flash (Atlanta)

Illinois: David Weisskopf (Highland Park), Joshua Weisskopf (Highland Park), Liat Wasserman (Northbrook), Josh Zucker (Oak Park), Jack Rubinstein (Evanston), Ranan Vales (Deerfield), Melissa Levin (Northbrook), Sarah Levin (Northbrook), Joey Spellberg (Highland Park), Rebecca Greenstein

(Winnetka), Gabrielle Marzouk (Buffalo Grove), Emma Siegel (Chicago), Celia Pivo (Hawthron Woods), Max Pivo (Hawthron Woods)

Kansas: Kayla Goldenberg (Leawood)

Massachusetts: Aaron Stone (Newton), Ruth Landis (Lexington), Evan Chansky (Framingham), Harrison Steier (Malborough)

Maryland: Louis Popkin (Bethesda), Uri Farber (Silver Spring), Hannah Smith (Rockville), Jordana Gruber (Rockville), Ilan Cohen (Bethesda)

Michigan: Allison Bloomberg (Farmington Hills)

Minnesota: Jenna Simon (Edina)

New Jersey: Shoshana Scheinberg (Hoboken), Matthew Amster (Morganville), Dina Doctoroff (Livingston), Joshua Eiger (Manalapan), Kimberly Robbins (Short Hills), Arielle Solomon (West Orange)

New York: Jacob Eckhaus (Rochester), Cara Kupferman (New York City), Sarah Young (Syracuse), Emily Rosenberg (Orangeburg), Avraham Presberg (Rochester), Sarah Eilgberg (Albany)

Ohio: Max Littman (Worthington), Evan Shaw (Shaker Heights)

Pennsylvania: Ruben Level (Nazareth), Ethan Mackler (Pittsburgh), Aliza Bromberg Gaber (Newtown), Mia Stein (Philadelphia)

South Carolina: Anna Book (Charleston)

Tennessee: Murray Lebovitz (Chattanooga, TN)

Wisconsin: Jessica Perl (Glendale)

Canada: Adam Miller (Vancouver, BC), Molly Pascoe (Toronto, ON)

About USY

United Synagogue Youth (USY) is Conservative Judaism's premiere youth group, run by its parent organization, The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. With more than 350 local chapters, USY boasts a membership of thousands of teens throughout the United States and Canada. For more than 60 years, USY has taught the young Jews the values and skills they need to become exceptional leaders in their religious and secular communities. USY's focus on leadership, social action, and relationship building has produced successful alumni with a deep sense of pride in and love for their Jewish identity. Through year round programming and domestic and international travel opportunities, USY provides meaningful, immersive Jewish experiences, helping teens integrate Jewish rituals and values into their everyday lives. To learn more, visit www.usy.org.

About USCJ

The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism is a community of North American kehillot (congregations) committed to a dynamic Judaism that is learned and passionate, authentic and pluralistic, joyful and accessible. USCJ creates the spiritual, intellectual, and managerial network

that empowers our kehillot to fulfill their sacred mission and connects them with a common sense of community, shared mission and purpose. To learn more, visit www.uscj.org.

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