



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **United Synagogue Youth's 66<sup>th</sup> Annual International Convention in Dallas to Focus on Strengthening Teens' Leadership Capabilities**

### ***New Partnership with NOAM Global Masorti Youth Movement to Launch at Convention***

**New York, NY, December 13, 2016** – This December 25-29, nearly 1,000 Jewish teenagers, educators, professionals, and alumni from United Synagogue Youth (USY) will gather in Dallas, TX for five days of Hanukkah celebrations, interactive learning, and hands-on social action at USY's 66<sup>th</sup> International Convention. A program of The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ), USY is America's largest Conservative Jewish youth group.

This convention marks several firsts for the organization, from its inaugural Texas location to a new milestone in USY's partnership with NOAM, its sister youth movement that reaches Masorti teens globally. USY will host young adults from ten countries including Israel, Argentina, Ukraine, Uganda, and beyond at the convention and kick off a year-long pairing of NOAM's global chapters with USY regions. This new program will help foster lasting relationships between Jewish teens from diverse backgrounds, as well as global learning initiatives and social action projects.

"We are excited to bring together our teens to create global connections and discuss their shared future as leaders of Masorti/Conservative Judaism," said Rabbi David Levy, USCJ's Sr. Director, Teen Learning.

The convention will focus on the theme *Chazak, Chazak, v'Nitchazek*, which translates to Be Strong, Be Strong, May We Be Strengthened. Through interactive educational programming, community service, and talks from peers and leading professionals the convention will build teens' capacity as Jewish leaders, individuals, and advocates.

"USYers will leave feeling empowered to create positive change...and build a stronger future for themselves [and] their communities," said teen co-chairs Noa Rose and Harrison Steier. "We will grow together and learn to overcome modern challenges in a Jewish context."

Convention guests include keynote speaker, CEO and President of Hillel Eric Fingerhut, a USY alumnus and past Central Region USY (CRUSY) president and former star wrestler/professional motivational speaker Rohan Murphy. Educational partners include Hillel, KESHET, and Stand With Us with study sessions focusing on topics such as the Holocaust, modern day Judaism in America, Israeli history, politics, and culture, Judaism on the college campus, inclusion, and the media.

In conjunction with local agencies, the entire convention body will participate in several hands-on social action projects with partners including Goodwill of Dallas, Hope Farm, ACH Child and Family Services, Congregation Ahavath Sholom, Christian Center of Fort Worth, North Texas Food Bank, Catholic Charities of Ft. Worth, Christian Community Action, Mission Arlington, and Mission Metroplex. The teens will also take part in ongoing charitable activities over the course of the convention, collecting donations for local Dallas agencies.

The convention will also expose teens to local Texas culture including visits to the Fort Worth Stockyards, a large-scale kosher BBQ at “the World’s Largest Honkey Tonk,” Billy Bob’s Texas, and a private evening at the Perot Museum of Nature and Science.

This year’s convention is sponsored by Uber, The Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas and the Schultz Family, Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo, North Suburban Synagogue Beth El, Congregation Beth Torah, Congregation B’nai Amoona, Congregation Ahavath Sholom, Congregation Shearith Israel, Congregation Anshai Torah, Congregation Agudas Achim, Butler Motor Transit, Josh Mohrer, Dianne and Martin Newman, and Donna and Herb Weitzman.

### **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](http://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](http://www.uscj.org).

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