



## PRESS RELEASE

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DECEMBER 30, 2013 – A passionately Jewish high school student from Northern California has been elected to the prestigious office of 2014 International President of United Synagogue Youth, the North American youth group affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

Aaron Pluemer of Sunnyvale was chosen by his peers to lead the 20,000 member group at last week's USY International Convention in New Orleans. Nearly 700 teens spent their winter break at the event, where they celebrated, studied, met with prominent USY alumni, and worked on the continuing effort to rebuild New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

A member of Congregation Sinai in San Jose and a student at Kehillah High School in Palo Alto, Aaron is described by his peers and principal as a warm, outgoing, energetic young man who is a knowledgeable, committed Jew and a natural leader among his peers.

"Aaron is force of positive energy and leadership at Kehillah Jewish High School, and can often be found leading our siddur minyan. His smile, demeanor, and sense of humor bring joy to the hallways and classrooms of our school," said Darren Kleinberg, head of school. "We know that United Synagogue Youth will benefit greatly from his leadership as president of the international executive board."

At Congregation Sinai, Aaron sits on the board of directors and is involved in Shabbat services as a prayer leader, Torah/Haftarah chanter, and gabbai.

Since its inception more than 60 years ago, USY has shaped the lives of 250,000 North American Jewish teens, and has nurtured an exceptionally high number of Jewish communal leaders and others who go on to be leaders in their fields. At the New Orleans conference, the keynote speaker was film director Andy Fickman (*She's the Man, You Again, Parental Guidance*), recipient of this year's USY Alumni Award, who told the group that his success in Hollywood stemmed directly from the people and leadership skills he gained as a USY leader in Texas.

Another USY alum who spoke was Jessica Abo, an award-winning broadcast journalist in New York who spends a great deal of time on philanthropic and social causes.

In addition to Pluemer as international president, the new USY executive board includes: Israel Affairs VP, Ariel Weinstein of St. Louis Park, Minnesota; Religion/Education VP, Gila Fridkis of Highland, Maryland; Social Action/Tikun Olam VP, Joe Goldberg of Chesterfield, Missouri; Membership/Kadima VP, Abraham Bayer of Glastonbury, Connecticut; and Communications VP, Brandon Ginsberg of West Palm Beach, Florida.

## **About United Synagogue Youth**

[USY](http://www.usy.org) is the high school affiliate of The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, the association of Conservative synagogues, representing some one million Conservative Jews throughout North America. USY is comprised of 17 regions with over 350 local chapters. Along with its pre-teen affiliate, it includes 20,000 members throughout the United States and Canada. For more information, visit [www.usy.org](http://www.usy.org).

## **About the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism**

The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism is a community of nearly 630 North American and another 200 worldwide kehillot – sacred communities – committed to a dynamic Judaism that is learned and passionate, authentic and pluralistic, joyful and accessible, egalitarian or traditional.

Our kehillot create the conditions for a powerful and vibrant Jewish life, empowering Jews in North America to seek the presence of God, to seek meaning and purpose in Torah and mitzvot, to fully engage with Israel, and to be inspired by Judaism to improve the world and the Jewish people.

It serves over 200,000 households, representing more than one million people. More

information is available at [www.uscj.org](http://www.uscj.org).