



*North Shore Jewish Center*

*Aaron Avni*

Thank you to the North Shore Jewish Center Mens Club for honoring me as their Man of the Year. And mazel tov to our youth honoree, Finn Rubman, and to all the other worthy recipients in the Metro NY region of the FJMC.

I joined NSJC in 2005 as my oldest daughter, Maddy, began Hebrew School in kindergarten. At that time, I envisioned myself as a drop off/pick up parent and a High Holiday Jew. I grew up unaffiliated in Florida, and was unaccustomed to synagogue life. Within a short period of time, I began going to Mens Club events and began to make friends within the Club. I started to recognize the value and ideals of the Mens Club, and was asked to come onto the Board. As a busy ophthalmologist and a father of 3 young children, I cannot tell you how bizarre and scary the idea seemed to me at the time, but I opened my mind and my time to the experience and have never regretted it. During my time on the Board, I served as recording secretary, VP of membership, and eventually Club President from 2015-2017. I also revamped and grew our annual synagogue Golf Outing. I attended FJMC International Convention in Miami in 2015, where I had an amazing experience. As Maddy (who was a Youth Honoree in 2018), my son Alex, and my younger daughter Lilly completed their B'nai Mitzvot, it was all the more special being such a part of the community that educated them in Judaism and Jewish life.

I have spent the last 15 years of my life gaining an enhanced Jewish identity, community involvement, and leadership skill set as a result of my exposure to the wonderful organization that is the NSJC Mens Club. As they thank me in bestowing this honor, I am forever thankful to them for the opportunities, encouragement, and friendship they gave me on my journey.