CHAPTER 3

LEADERSHIP ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is not the position that honors the person, but rather the person that honors the position.
— Taanit 21b
ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TYG EXECUTIVE BOARD

“There is a difference between interest and commitment. When you are interested in doing something, it is only when convenient. When committed, you accept no excuses, only results.”

–Kenneth Blanchard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REPUTATION</th>
<th>What you do is what you are.</th>
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<tr>
<td>RESPECT</td>
<td>You don’t deserve it, you earn it!</td>
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<tr>
<td>REPRESENTATIVE</td>
<td>You represent your entire youth group in not only the Temple, but in your school and community as well.</td>
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Being a member of the TYG Executive Board is an honor that comes with a great deal of responsibility. This manual includes valuable information about leadership, because leaders are not born, they’re made.

This manual also details the responsibilities of each position on the Executive Board, but it’s important to remember that we are all a team. We must remember to support each other and work together, recognizing each other’s strengths and weaknesses to continue to improve our TYG.

One thing to keep in mind throughout the year: document important information that will be helpful for the next person who serves in your position.

REMEMBER to have a great time too! Your enthusiasm attracts others and we want lots of people to know how great it is to be involved with our TYG!

Contents:
• Art of Leadership
• The Role of the TYG…
  • President
  • Programming Vice President
  • Social Action Vice President
  • Religious & Cultural Vice President
  • Membership and Communications Vice President
  • Treasurer
  • Secretary
  • Advisor

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THE ART OF LEADERSHIP

- A leader is one who has followers.
- A leader deserves to have followers if he or she has earned recognition. Authority alone is no longer enough to command respect.
- A leader sees things through the eyes of followers.
- A leader puts himself or herself in the shoes of the follower and helps make their dreams come true.
- A leader does not say, “Get going!” Instead, a leader says “Let’s go!” and leads the way.
- A leader does not walk behind with a whip, but is out in front with a banner.
- A leader assumes that followers are working with the leader, not for the leader.
- A leader considers followers to be partners in the work and sees to it that everyone share in the rewards.
- A leader glorifies team spirit.
- A leader duplicates himself or herself in others.
- A leader is a person builder, helping followers grow big because the more big people there are, the stronger the organization.
- A leader does not hold others down, but lifts them up.
- A leader reaches out his or her hand to help followers scale the peaks.
- A leader has faith in people, believes in them, trusts them, and thus draws out the best in them, enabling them to rise to high expectations.
- A leader is a self-starter.
- A leader creates plans and sets them in motion.
- A leader is a person of thought and of action, both a dreamer and a doer.
- A leader has a sense of humor.
- A leader is not a stuffed shirt.
- A leader can laugh at himself or herself.
- A leader has a humble spirit.
- A leader can be led by others.
- A leader is not interested in having his or her own way, but works to find the best way.
- A leader always has an open mind.
- A leader has high goals, strives to make the efforts of himself or herself and his or her followers contribute to the enrichment of the entire group.
THE ROLE OF THE TYG PRESIDENT

THE PARADOX OF PRESIDENCY:

- The president delegates most responsibility.
- At the same time, the president is aware of all that is happening, and making sure it gets done and done.
- The key to being a good president is maintaining a balance between the delegation and supervision.

THE “SUPERIOR” ROLE – A PRESIDENT MUST BE...

- Aware of all TYG affairs to properly relay information.
- Informed of all program details.
- Responsible for ensuring that work is done properly by other board members, event chairs, etc.
- A representative of the entire TYG.
- Ultimately responsible for every project.
- Liaison to the Youth Director, Youth Advisor, the synagogue and NFTY Region.

DELEGATOR OF RESPONSIBILITY

** DO NOT DO EVERYTHING EVEN IF IT IS MORE EFFICIENT! **

WHAT TO DELEGATE:

- Duties performed by a specific officers:
  - Programming VP
  - Social Action VP
  - Religious & Cultural VP
  - Membership VP
  - Publicity VP
  - Secretary
  - Treasurer
  - NFTY Regional Representative

WHAT NOT TO DELEGATE:

- Presidential responsibilities including public relations, phone calls and letters only you should be making.
- Jobs you would not want to do yourself – the presidency does not give you the privilege not to participate (such as envelope stuffing, cold calling, etc.).
SETTING GOALS

(Should be done with your board at the beginning of the year but it’s never too late to start!)

- Create a TYG *brit* (covenant of your working community – see appendix)
- List strengths and weaknesses of the TYG
- Get input from members not on the board
- Designate people to work on specific goals
- Brainstorm event ideas
- Make a tentative calendar
- Publicize, publicize, publicize!!!
- Involve the religious school to reach out to potential members

PLANNING THE CALENDAR WITH THE YOUTH DIRECTOR AND/OR YOUTH ADVISOR

- Local programming is very important for new members – do not rely on the NFTY Region to provide all the programming at regional events for the year!
- Use the following calendars to determine when you can plan programs that won’t create conflicts:
  - NFTY Regional and North American Events
  - School vacations
  - Jewish Holidays
  - SAT and other standardized testing dates
  - Federal Holidays
- Have at least one board meeting per month
- Have at least one program per month
- Combine educational and social programming
- DO NOT OVERSCHEDULE!
- Remember to let the NFTY Regional officers know about TYG events!

RUNNING MEETINGS

- Always be on time!
- Leave slack for socializing, but don’t let things get out of hand. People are taking time out of their schedules to be there, so remind them how little time you have together!
- Agendas
  - Get input from other board members beforehand…make it their agenda too (they’ll respect the reports all the more and they’ll pay attention).
  - Allow each officer to speak about what they are working on.
  - Keep a flexible time table.
  - Discuss only one piece of business at a time.
- You ARE the board meeting so…
  - Use positive verbal and physical language.
  - Be enthusiastic.
• Be clear and concise.
• Be reasonable.
• Encourage others (remember – what goes around, comes around!).
• Look at ALL sides of ALL issues, especially controversial ones.
• Silence does not mean agreement, search for opinions.
• When discussing leadership, qualifications should be discussed, not gossip.
• Positive morale at meetings will lend to positive morale overall.
• Know the TYG constitution (if you have one) and its limitations.
• Confidentiality—you determine what is confidential with the Youth Director/Advisor and/or the board—make sure that everyone knows what is confidential and what isn’t!

RELATIONS

The President is the link that binds all parts and people of the TYG together.

THE TYG BOARD

• Communication
  • Maintain lines of communication on a regular basis with all officers.
  • Discuss and then write down all expectations that you have of your officers, with realistic deadlines.
  • Be sure they know what you expect of them.
• Meetings
  • Establish a regular time and remind officers and members of it as often as possible.
• Professionalism—What’s Personal vs. What’s Professional
  • Avoid board spats (unless they directly relate to the welfare of the entire group).
  • Keep personal business personal.
  • Don’t reprimand anyone in public.

THE TEMPLE COMMUNITY

• Each temple is different—know what you can and cannot expect from it.
• Don’t push too hard, but don’t underestimate the value of the temple, it is crucial in making a strong TYG—TYG success is the temple’s success.
• Go to Temple Board meetings and make reports as needed—clear all dates and report topics in advance with the Temple Board President and Executive Director (the TYG President should sit on the Board and attend meetings).
• Remember that we are a part of the community and should support the Temple as much as the Temple supports us.
• Invite Temple officers and Senior Staff members to events – let them see us in action!
• Put the Temple President and Senior Staff on your mailing list.
• Do creative services for the congregation.
• Work with the Rabbis, Cantor, and Temple Educator as additional resources.
• Get to know the chair of the Youth Committee
  • Invite him or her to events.
  • Ask him or her to help with adult support.
  • Ask him or her to help raise money.
  • Ask him or her to help plan events.
• Don’t forget about the support/custodial staff who help out and clean up after us.

THE NFTY REGION
• Make sure TYG members get copies of all regional mailings and event applications.
• Forward important e-mails and electronic newsletters to all of your TYG members.
• Use NFTY Regional officers as additional resources.
• Encourage members to attend NFTY Regional events and don’t forget to keep an eye on them once you get them there!

THE FUTURE
• Save everything you feel is important or could be helpful to your successor.
• Make notes or files for your successor so they don’t have to reinvent the wheel.
• Note your mistakes so they will not be repeated and so others may learn from them.
• Remember that big ideas take time to get off the ground—be patient, but don’t let more time go by. You may not benefit from the results but others will!
• Have a separate meeting with your successor to orient him or her to your position.

REMEMBER TO ENJOY YOURSELF THIS YEAR
YOUR ENTHUSIASM RUBS OFF ON OTHERS!
THE ROLE OF THE PROGRAMMING VICE PRESIDENT

• To promote and encourage the use of NFTY’s goals and values (www.nfty.org/about/goals) in TYG programming
• To serve as a programming resource to all TYG positions that are involved with programming
• To prepare programs (when asked) for weekend retreats, shul-ins, or other TYG events
• To be responsible for finding the appropriate space/location for programs (with help from the president and TYG advisor)
• To type up programs in a program format sheet for all group leaders, TYG board members, and adults involved in the program
• Create program guide sheets for all group leaders or facilitators of the programs and hand them out in advance of the scheduled event.

What makes NFTY programming so special is not the specific aims or content of the programming, but the context and the process of the programming itself. For this reason, NFTY programming is often called “informal education,” to distinguish it from the “formal education” that goes on in religious school classrooms. Since it is the form and not the substance of NFTY programming that differentiates it from classroom education, a more appropriate label for NFTY programming is “experiential education.” The objective of this process is to create a well-written program prepared through a thoughtful process. Following the right format produces a much finer product.

You should always organize your programs according to the Program Format Sheet (found in Chapter 4 of this booklet). This makes programming easier and allows for anyone not directly involved in the program to know what is going on. Don’t worry about memorizing the format; just become familiar with the NFTY Program Format Sheet.

The key to a successful youth group year is having a variety of programming. Too much of one type of program can become boring and therefore discourage participation in the TYG. The TYG should educate and involve its members in as many different aspects of Jewish life as possible.

You should also be familiar with the Programming Road Map (also in Chapter 4 of this booklet) that can be adapted to fit any program. This map is a guideline to help move you in the right direction of the planning process of your program.

WHO SHOULD PLAN A PROGRAM?

A number of people should be involved in the planning depending on the type of the event and the size of the group. A small program planning committee of people (including one of the chairs of the program and the PVP) should plan the program using the Programming Road Map. If the TYG President or Advisor are not involved directly, be sure to keep them informed throughout the process.

Helpful Resources:
www.nfty.org/resources/studytheme
www.nfty.org/programbank
www.nfty.org/programming
THE ROLE OF THE SOCIAL ACTION VICE PRESIDENT

Ani V’atah N’Shanah et HaOlam, You and I Will Change the World—You and I, individually and together. We have the ability to change our world. Not only do we have the ability, but we also have the obligation to mend our world and pass that tradition on to our children.

Social Action is one of the most far-reaching aspects of TYG activities as it affects not only us but also the world around us. Social Action is the responsibility all of us have as TYG members, as Jews, and most of all as concerned citizens of the Earth to make our world better, and to educate ourselves so we can take action on our beliefs. This is the meaning of Social Action and it is up to the SAVP to help others understand this meaning.

INFORM OTHERS

• Teach the three “A’s” of Social Action: Awareness, Advocacy and Action.
• Keep our members aware.
• Raise the social conscience of our group.
• Keep issues relevant and information up-to-date.
• Make sure issues are presented so everyone can relate.
• Make sure all Social Action programs or Social Action drives run smoothly.
  • Make sure all information is clear and presented well.
  • Meet with all group leaders and make sure they understand their job (this will keep participants interested).

GET EVERYONE INVOLVED

• Social Action is for EVERYONE! (Don’t forget it!)
• Everyone has to do their part.
• Make sure that less active participants aren’t intimidated by more active members.
• Everyone should feel like they belong.
• Not everyone has to join Amnesty International or participate in the AIDS Walk to be involved in Social Action.
• Not everyone is anxious to do their part—it can be difficult to get others involved.
• Approach each person as an individual.
• Get everyone involved ANY WAY YOU CAN!
• People will want to do more once they see how important it is to help out.

KEEP TYG MEMBERS ACTIVE

• Always be planning or doing something! (Perpetual social action drives are great for TYG morale).
• At every Board meeting bring up social action.
• Work with your congregation to collaborate on projects (e.g. canned food drive during High Holy Days).
• Mix social action with social events to help get more people involved.
• Include social action at every event.
  • Identify items needed for donation to local agencies.
  • Write letters to congress about important issues.
  • Raise money for tzedakah.
  • Donate to NFTY sponsored projects (check with your Regional NFTY SAVP for more information).
• Keep a Social Action Bulletin Board in the Youth Lounge listing things everyone can do to stay involved.

REMEMBER the goal is to combine education (limud) with action (peulah) when programming for Social Action.

Limud—Education is a vital part of Social Action and should be the first part of any Social Action program. Through education, people are able to make responsible decisions as to how they want their world to be.

Peulah—Education does not count for much unless it leads to action. Only through action can change occur. After being educated, people must be motivated to take action. Without action, all efforts to educate are worthless. Action should be the second part and the ultimate goal of any social action program.

STAY AWARE

• Always look for information.
• YOU need to know what is going on in YOUR world.
• Read the newspaper and watch the news.

Helpful resources
www.nfty.org/socialaction
www.rac.org
THE ROLE OF THE RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL VICE PRESIDENT

• To promote and encourage Reform Jewish religious and cultural activities in the TYG.
• To stimulate knowledge of Jewish culture, religion, Reform Judaism’s creed “Choice through Knowledge,” history, and Israel.
• To serve as a support to the ‘cultural specialists’ of your TYG, such as songleaders, danceleaders, Israel representatives, etc.
• To be responsible for tfil'ot at events or holidays when needed.
• To stimulate worship and study at events.
• To create or lead inspiring worship services (using your own or regional creative services, the prayer books of the Reform movement, or from NFTY supplements and resources).
• To prepare and present benedictions, d’vrei Torah, invocations, and other spiritually uplifting statements at Board Meetings.

It is the role of the RCVP to serve as the liaison between the Jewish community (the TYG) and Jewish education. Being an effective RCVP is more than being a service writer. Don’t be afraid to emphasize the C in RCVP—the cultural aspects of Judaism. Some suggestions for cultural activities might be:
• Israeli song and dance fest
• Creating a TYG cookbook of Jewish recipes as a fundraiser
• Preparing High Holiday meals for residents in local nursing homes
• Plan a Walk through Jewish History; we have 350+ years in North America, more than enough to create an amazing program about Jewish art, music and folklore

The most important thing to know as the RCVP is that you are the liaison of resources. If fellow TYGers come to you with questions about services, Israel, or any other Jewish topic, to which you just don’t know the answer, don’t be afraid to either help them find the information or point them in the direction of someone who might know. It’s not your job to know everything Jewish, but it is your job to be a liaison between the TYG and rabbis and educators in your congregation.

Helpful resources:
www.nfty.org/resources/rc
www.nfty.org/resources/servicebank
www.nfty.org/resources/learning
THE ROLE OF THE MEMBERSHIP AND COMMUNICATIONS VICE PRESIDENT

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY ACTIVATE AND INCREASE MEMBERSHIP

WHERE TO FIND POTENTIAL MEMBERS:

• Confirmation and 8th grade class lists
• Temple membership list
• Jewish friends of current members
• Put notices in temple bulletins and make announcements at Friday night dinners – the more places a parent can see youth group recruitment material, the more they can encourage their children to go (once the kids get here, they're hooked!)

NOTE—some people aren't interested so don't push them into joining

COMMUNICATION WITH POTENTIAL MEMBERS

• Send out flyers which should be innovative and eye-pleasing and should stand out from the rest of the mail
• Use brightly colored paper, drawings, clip art
• Include all necessary information such as
  • Times
  • Dates
  • Location
  • Cost
  • To whom to respond to and a deadline (usually a week to two weeks before actual event)
• Keep the overall flyer brief and to the point
• Mail the flyer 2-3 weeks in advance of event
• Sometimes send it out more than once (2nd notice can be a postcard)
• Show final copy to the Youth Advisor to proofread BEFORE copies are made and mailed!

WHAT DOESN’T WORK when making flyers

• Don't just type out info, BE CREATIVE
• Don't make the flyer more than one page
• Don't go crazy with design, it will be too confusing
• Don't go over budget
• Don't send it out 4 days before an event—people need advance notice (at least three weeks in advance)

NOTE—People love to get fun mail so be sure to make fun flyers!

Also, be sure to e-mail out an electronic version of all flyers so that you can reach your potential members through several different avenues.
PHONE CALLS

• Remember to call all potential members; they may feel more comfortable coming if they know someone ahead of time (try to assign calls to people who know the potential member so there is an automatic connection).
• Those that seem the least likely to come tend to end up being the most dedicated members.
• Personal phone calls show that you care if they come or not and almost always result in higher participation.
• Establish a phone system from one of the following three options:
  • PHONE TREES—one person calls two people who each call two people, etc.
  • PHONE CIRCLES—divide group into circles, one person starts the calls until the call gets back to the originator
  • PHONE COMMITTEES—a chair organizes a committee and gives each person a list of people to call
• Have a master list of members and callers
• Delegate calls to board members
• Give callers advance notice so that they can call both far in advance and the day before the event
• Be sure all callers have all the information they need
• Be enthusiastic but straightforward
• Remember—everyone doesn’t necessarily know what a TYG or NFTY region is, so be sure to explain it to them
• Use freshmen and non-board members later in the year to help make calls when they become active
• REMIND PEOPLE TO BE RESPONSIBLE! If one person doesn’t make their calls, you lose potential members/event participants
• KEEP PHONE SYSTEM CONSISTENT!!!
• Consider setting up a text-messaging tree to reinforce the information and RSVP dates!

NOTE—talking on the phone is fun—don’t treat it like a chore!

MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMMING

• Plan an enticing, non-threatening program to hook potential members.
• Explain what a TYG and NFTY region are and how they relate.
• Explain what shul-in, institutes, and kallot are to your members.
• Everyone, especially the Board, should show their enthusiasm about the event and the new members. Remember that you’re the role models, and if you’re psyched, they will be too!
  • Beware of cliques—they are a definite turn off
  • Be especially outgoing and get people into the swing of things
  • Make it fun so people will want to come back
  • Plan way ahead
  • Make sure everything is set and ready to go
  • Make sure everyone involved in the planning is well informed
• If the program isn’t going well…
  • Have a back-up plan (movie in the youth lounge, games, mixers, etc.)
  • End the program when enthusiasm is starting to die down
  • Remember that not all programs go well, so just make sure to follow a not-so-hot program with a really great one!
• Try cheap or free events to cut down on costs
• Tailor programs to fit your group – you know what people like, so give it to them, but don’t sacrifice social action or ritual because people aren’t as enthusiastic about them
• Food is always fun

ACTIVATING MEMBERSHIP

• Follow-up program with continued communication and programming throughout the year
• Motivate people to come back by acting like the TYG is best thing in which to be involved
• The board should always be enthusiastic despite how they may really feel—they are role models and enthusiasm breeds enthusiasm
• Talk about the TYG outside of events and other Temple activity—build relationships with the new people, make them want to come back

MIXER IDEAS FOR THE MCVP

What is a mixer? A mixer is an ice breaking activity done at the beginning of an event to give people a chance to get to know one another. They are usually silly games that are not intimidating for new people. Below is a list of common mixers and brief explanations of how to do each one.

NAME GAME
Have people sit in a circle. Each person should think of an adjective that begins with the first letter of their name and describes something about themselves. Go around the circle and have each person say their name and their adjective, as well as the names and adjectives of the people who went before them. This helps new people remember everyone’s names faster.

FIND YOUR PARTNER
Give half the group cards with the name of a Jewish event on it. Give the other half of the group cards with the dates that correspond with that event. (i.e.: Creation of the State of Israel–1948) Everyone should walk around calling out their event/date until they find their partner.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU
People should have found their partners from the previous game. The partners should find a corner of the room and learn 3-5 things about each other that can be shared with the rest of the group. After a few minutes, have the group come back into a circle and each person should introduce their partner.

TOILET PAPER GAME
Pass a roll of toilet paper around the circle and have each participant tear off as much as they use in one day. Once each person has their paper, tell them that they must share something with the group about themselves for each square of paper that they took off the roll (This also works with M&M’s).
PEOPLE BINGO
Create a bingo board that has various traits that apply to participants in the group. The group should walk around and find people to sign the boxes with which they identify with. For example, one of the boxes says that there is a person who has a younger sister with red hair. Participants have to ask questions of each other and start conversations in order to figure out who fits that description.

PUZZLE PIECES
Give everyone in the group a piece of a puzzle. Together, the members of the group have a complete puzzle. They must work together to create the finished product. This is better when you have small groups.

THE ROLE OF THE TREASURER

THE ART OF FUNDRAISING
In order to have a successful year, every youth group needs to make money. This makes future events possible and also helps keep the cost for each participant down. Money can also be donated to a specific charity or cause. REMEMBER that every aspect of a youth group requires money to make it work, such as membership, social action, Judaics, transportation and communication.

The first thing to bear in mind when planning a fundraiser is that it is a PROGRAM and should be treated as one. Just like other types of programs, a fundraiser will only work with careful planning and preparation. Things may seem complex and confusing, but using the correct process can make them run much more easily and smoothly.

There are three different kinds of fundraisers:
• General—where profits go towards the general use of the group
• Specific—where profits are for a specific goal (NFTY Convention, etc.)
• Social Action—where profits go to tzedakah

Remember, you always need the following to run a successful fundraiser:
• Approval from the Youth Advisor and Temple Staff
• Support from your fellow TYG members
• You can’t do everything by yourself, so know when to ask for help
• Lots of advertising

REMEMBER—Additional funds may be available through Sisterhood, Brotherhood, the Rabbi’s Fund or other groups within the temple. Work with the Youth Advisor to find these sources of money and how to ask for them appropriately.
# IDEAS FOR FUNDRAISERS

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<th>Silent Auction</th>
<th>Car Wash</th>
<th>Garage/Rummage/Tag Sale</th>
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<tr>
<td>_____-a-thon</td>
<td>Cards for holidays</td>
<td>_____-grams (NFTY region, TYG)</td>
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<td>(dance, walk, rock,</td>
<td>Carnival</td>
<td>Hamantashen Sale</td>
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<td>swim, pray, etc.)</td>
<td>Clean yards</td>
<td>Casino Night</td>
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<td>Babysitting Service</td>
<td>Coat &amp; Hat Check at Temple functions</td>
<td>Recipe Book</td>
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<td>Bagel Breakfast</td>
<td>Coffee Sale</td>
<td>Recycling Drive</td>
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<td>Bake Sale</td>
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<td>Talent Show</td>
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<td>Bingo</td>
<td>Dinner Theater</td>
<td>Trivia Contest</td>
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<td>Birthday parties for kids</td>
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<td>Book Sale</td>
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<td>Candy Sale</td>
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# THE ROLE OF THE SECRETARY—
Keeping the Official Record of Meetings—The Minutes

## EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- Date
- Attendance
- All decisions
- Policies—newly decided or changed
- Any controversial discussions—who said what, who supported which side and why

## HELPFUL HINTS

- Use an outline form for typing up or writing down notes (“minutes”)
- Type (or very neatly write) the minutes
- Make the information clear and legible to others
- Keep minutes confidential (only for the eyes of the Board)

## DELIVERING INFORMATION

Occasionally, letters have to be written and it is important and they make you look good!

- Thank you notes
- Congratulations
- Birthday cards
- Condolences
- RSVP’s to NFTY regional events on behalf of the TYG as a whole

We also need you to work with the Membership and Communication VP’s on a regular basis to continue to promote the entire group.
TYG ADVISOR JOB DESCRIPTION

The adult leaders of youth programs often are available to young people at all hours of the day, labor without adequate compensation, have limited benefits, and go unrecognized for their contributions to youth and community development. Yet, they are the frontline workers who breathe life into our youth programs.

The professional development of adults, both as new and existing staff in congregational youth services, is a continuing concern to the field of formal and informal Jewish education. Different avenues for expanding opportunities for preparation for youth work, whether through post-secondary educational institutions, specially designed educational curricula and programs, or on the job training, are now being explored by youth service providers. These efforts are likely to enhance the effectiveness of programs experienced by adolescents as well as increase the recognition of youth-development work as a valued service.

THE CONGREGATIONAL YOUTH WORKER

Being a congregational youth worker requires a wide range of skills and abilities. The credentials include knowledge of Judaism and Jewish youth programming, as well as knowledge of the congregation and resources within the community. The individual must be able to work with people of all ages—both one-on-one and in groups—with a particular affinity towards working with adolescents.

A pleasant personality is a must, as is a sense of humor, integrity, sincerity, and a strong sense of responsibility and commitment. To be successful, one must keep up on the latest teen interests and issues, and yet still be able to maintain a mature adult status. It is important to feel positively towards being Jewish and to hold a strong belief in the values and goals of Reform Judaism. Energy, persistence, faith, and optimism are high on the list as well. A congregational youth worker will be interacting with young people, to be sure, but will also be interacting with all the members of the congregational family as a youth advocate.

The youth worker's most important responsibility is as a Jewish adult role model for every adolescent who takes part in the congregation’s youth program. The youth worker is an adult whom the youth look up to and respect. This concept extends well beyond the limits of youth events. Ideally the youth worker is someone in touch with teen interests and issues, and has a minimum of four years age difference.

Teenagers are at a stage of life when they experiment with their personalities and their lifestyles. They are trying to decide what constitutes ethical and moral behavior within society’s guidelines. They are examining their Jewish identities and deciding how Jewish they want their lives to be. Every adult with whom they come into contact, especially those with whom they are close, represents an example of a different way that they could live their lives.

Be assured: the youth worker is no glorified “chaperone” who, every once in a while, gets to “play” with the kids. The youth worker is a vital, pivotal adult whose every action and attitude serves to
influence the lives of young people. The youth worker is one of the key adults whose life will be emulated by young people when they move into adulthood.

YOU CALL THIS A JOB DESCRIPTION?

Having talked about what skills and abilities the person who becomes a youth worker must possess, it is important to understand what a youth worker is asked to do. Here is a short list of job responsibilities.

FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM…

- Become an authority on youth. Through reading books and articles, watching specials, etc., the youth worker should keep as current as possible in areas concerning the nature, problems, and concerns of youth.
- Acquire as much knowledge as possible about the congregation’s youth programming priorities, and the personality traits and habits of both congregational leaders and congregational youth, particularly the leaders.
- Attend all youth programming meetings. In a youth-led meeting, help youth make decisions democratically with due consideration for the interests of every member of the congregational youth population; in an adult-led meeting, ensure that the interests and needs of the youth and the congregation are being served. The youth worker is the final arbiter of the health, welfare, safety, and the reputation of the organization.
- By bringing new knowledge, attitudes, and ideas, help youth establish their goals, find the means of attaining them, and analyze their activities as they take place.
- Maintain continuous contact with youth leaders and committee chairpeople; attend youth planning meetings, and be available for consultation in all aspects of planning.
- Follow up with those entrusted with responsibilities. Ascertain that assignments are clear and that neither the individuals involved nor the group are harmed by anyone’s procrastination or failure to follow through on tasks.
- Oversee youth program finances. Participate in the planning of the youth segment of the congregation’s budget, and endeavor to stay within the approved budget allocation for youth activities. Oversee the youth program’s books and budgets, make suggestions, and give instructions as needed. Participate in deliberations of any large expenditures and the signing of any contracts with bands, buses, entertainment groups, etc.
- Oversee internal and external communication and publications. Satisfy yourself that all text is appropriate and in good taste. See to it that constructive public relations are established using all available tools (mailings, bulletin ads, website, etc.).
- Be responsible for all premises used for youth programming, ensuring that they are left secure, clean, and in good condition. Report any damage or loss of equipment to the appropriate authorities.
- Be the first to arrive and the last to leave any youth function.
- Be in contact with other youth advisors.
FOR INDIVIDUAL YOUTH...

- Counsel and advise congregational youth so that they actively participate in youth functions, develop their own leadership skills, assume responsibility for their own activities (when appropriate), and feel a part of the congregation and the community.
- Contact those congregational youth who are never seen to find out why they do not come out for youth programs. Take appropriate corrective action, and seek to involve the absent youth by drawing on their particular interests, skills, or talents.
- Guide individual youth toward involvement in special “growth” endeavors such as writing sermonettes or participating in tutorial and community-betterment programs.
- Be alert to apparent emotional or social problems, and call them to the attention of the rabbi, appropriate staff person, or parents. This can be a very sensitive area, and great caution and discretion must be exercised. Occasionally, do personal counseling, but always be aware of your limitations.
- If asked, prepare college recommendations for high school seniors.
- Be intimately involved in any disciplinary action with those who violate the rules set by the congregation or sponsoring organization.

FOR OUTSIDE EVENTS...

- Accompany the participants on all out-of-town trips, and/or insure that appropriate adult supervision is present (if required by the congregation).
- Maintain contact with the Regional Youth Director, and NFTY staff (when appropriate), keeping yourself informed of all upcoming programs and projects.
- When invited, participate as a leader or presenter for any local or regional programs where you feel you have the knowledge-base to do so.
- Attend meetings of youth workers and youth committee personnel of your region.
- Attend professional leadership classes, and (where they are established) participate in professional betterment courses leading to youth worker certification.

FOR THE CONGREGATION...

- Maintain continuous contact with the Rabbi and the Youth Committee so that there are no misunderstandings about the nature and goals of the youth program.
- Maintain continuous contact with the congregation’s religious school Principal or Director of Education so that activities and schedules can be coordinated. Often participating youth are also students in the religious school. From time to time, congregational youth can help with projects for the religious school, to the benefit of both the individual participants and school students.
- Maintain continuous contact with key congregational leaders and staff members, coordinating activities, making the youth population a functional member of the congregational family, and keeping the congregation aware of the youth program’s activities and needs. Work with the Temple Bulletin editor to see that youth activities are publicized and acknowledged. Learn which staff and congregational members are responsible for available logistical support upon which the youth program may call.
• Attend meetings of the adult Youth Committee in order to maintain continuous contact with members, propose new programs, review past and present programs, analyze problem areas, seek logistic support, and clarify policy matters. Also participate in deliberations on the allocations of scholarship funds.
• Ascertain where and how the youth can best serve the congregation in needed activities and services.
• Become acquainted with as many parents as possible. They can become a source of help in providing chaperones, home hospitality, chauffeuring, and cooking. They can also help by advising specific committees, helping to get speakers, etc.
• Work toward building up interest among pre-teenagers and other congregational youth. Meet, when feasible, with teachers and parents of youth who may benefit from youth programs.
• Be sure that the congregation has adequate insurance and bonding for all events on or away from the premises. In case of an accident, attend to the injured person and immediately advise the appropriate parties.

FOR THE COMMUNITY…

• Become acquainted with the home communities and schools of the congregational youth. School schedules should be consulted before scheduling youth activities.
• Make contacts with youth workers and representatives of other religious and secular groups in the community.
• Be a resource person with knowledge and ideas for effective programming. Develop contacts within the community, and establish contacts with outside organizations and service bodies that can supply speakers, films, panels, etc., to fit the needs of the congregation’s youth program.
• Guide and monitor youth projects dealing with service to the community, ascertaining whether the recipients of such services are “bona fide” organizations actually in need of the services.