

Shalom y'all,

When I joined NFTY my freshman year, I was the kind of person who avoided large social gatherings, but that was in 2017, before public health standards required social distancing. By tenth grade, Maya Levy convinced me to fly across the country to Warwick, NY, to spend my summer with Reform Jewish teens. Although I was very hesitant to go to the URJ Kutz Camp, I would not be where I am now as a leader in NFTY without NFTY Incubator, Kutz's leadership track run by NFTY's North American Board.

Fast forward to March of 2020. My TYG had just wrapped up winter programming. I was PVP, and MCVP of MSTY, which had gone from barely surviving to thriving after our board's summer at Kutz. I was unsure about how we would continue creating meaningful connections while staying safe. As the world shut down around me, I further immersed myself in North American programming and helped my synagogue stream services every Shabbat. Within the first month of social distancing, I declared my candidacy to serve as NFTY-SW's MVP, a position that has expanded my vision of our possibilities as a movement through and beyond this pandemic. **Inspired by this vision for our future, I, Riley Genevieve Miner, declare my candidacy to serve as your 5781-5782 NFTY Membership Vice President.**

**We are not a movement that is built solely on numbers; we are built on the lasting relationships and connections that form within our *kehilah*.** Through my time in NFTY, one of the most valuable lessons that I have learned is how to connect and engage with new people. I came home from my first event with five new contacts in my phone; these five people were the ones who made an effort to integrate me into the Southwest community. After the event, I received texts such as: "I miss you! Can't wait 'til winter!" and "Ahhh! Early bird registration opens on Monday!" Later, as a member of Southwest's Welcoming Committee and then our MVP, I learned that this was relationship-based recruitment. This relationship-building connected me to the larger community after the callah and helped me feel welcomed at our next regional event. This recruiting style is what we used this past year to register voters through the RAC's Civic Engagement Campaign's Empower app.

**Relationship-based recruitment training for the NFTY General Board will allow us to grow as a community while also staying connected to one another.** Conducting these trainings at the beginning of board terms will help regions begin their year on the best foot possible. As a current MVP, I have trained NFTY-SW General Board how to reach out to members personally and effectively. Ensuring that members feel valued in our inclusive community does not just happen through pronoun stickers on name tags; instead, it requires the personal touch of adapting programs to fit each community's interests and needs. By having all board members develop personal connections within their communities, PVPs, RCVPs, and SAVPs will have the opportunity to connect and learn what members are passionate about; therefore, members will enjoy events that are catered to their needs.

**The transition to college shouldn't be the end of a teen's involvement with the Reform Movement,** especially for teens who lost the end of their in-person NFTY journeys due to COVID. As MVP, I will encourage NFTYites to become involved within the broader Jewish community through involvement with the RAC, URJ Camps, Hillel, and Shnat Netzer, the World Union for Progressive Judaism's Israel-based gap year program. These connections will keep teens affiliated with the Reform Movement even after graduating high school. At Brandeis next year, I will be involved in a multitude of Jewish programming on campus and in Greater Boston. I look forward to bringing the lessons I learn there back to the broader NFTY community.

**As we dive into the unknown, we must forge genuine inclusivity for new and old members.** Leadership training will ensure that our movement continues to connect teens to their Jewish communities -- in high school, gap years, college, and beyond. **NFTY, I would be honored to guide you through this crucial work for our movement.**

B'tikvah v'ahavah (with hope and love),  
Riley Genevieve Miner (she/her/hers)