

Back in May, the NFTY that we knew came crashing down. While I would love this letter to instill a picture of hope, a return back to the normal we knew before, I'd be doing a disservice to you if it did just that. Prior to this year, NFTY was on a downward trajectory complete with broad declines in membership and coinciding financial hardship. While this past year's changes were difficult at times, I believe they also created an incredible opportunity to rethink programming, event planning and NFTY as a whole. NFTY successfully created what I believe to be the most innovative and interactive programming platform for Jewish teens: NFTYx. The problem? It's not being used to its full potential. Most of the year consisted of regions moving their normal in-person events to the online platform. While great, this ALONE is not enough to spark new membership and breathe newfound excitement into our movement. **In order to light the spark and exhale exhilaration through new and innovative programming, I, Sam Goldstone, declare my candidacy for your 5781-5782 NFTY Programming Vice President.**

How does one take full advantage of NFTYx with the main goal of reaching new members? As NFTYites, we need to reimagine how we engage with NFTY in a new space. Rather than having different regions hold weekend-long kallot every couple of months OR individual programs over a long period of time in hopes of recreating an event, NFTY needs a combination of the two approaches. The most successful path forward involves both normal weekend Kallot and supplemental smaller NFTYx events aimed at increasing new membership and reaching a broader audience of Jewish teens. Simply put, fewer Jewish teens are interested in weekend-long NFTY events than were a decade ago. This shift ought to push NFTY and the URJ to re-evaluate how we stay true to our fundamental values, like Social Justice and Jewish experience, while expanding our movement and ensuring its sustainability. **As your NFTY PVP, I will fight my hardest to ensure that NFTY stays true to those fundamental values while widening our approach to programming and guaranteeing that we reach a broader demographic of teens than before,** deliberately inviting more teens to join our loving community. While this doesn't apply to me or to many NFTYites, the majority of teens today find a 2 hour long dance more appealing than a weekend long Kallah filled with educational programs. **The future of NFTY lies within the overlap of both those types of teens.** After all, NFTY should be a home for everyone.

If elected, one of my main focuses will be the programming network. The way I see it: the main role of any PVP, whether regional or national, is to be a teacher, educating others about the interconnected arts of programming and holistic experience. With NFTY bound to endure additional changes over the next year, it's essential that each PVP is equipped with the skills and support necessary to teach through a change process. To achieve this end, my goal is to create a buddy system within the PVP network. **Instead of simply connecting the PVPs with others in their NFTY area, I will schedule monthly calls with each area's PVPs to get a better understanding of their individual region's identities and how their boards are progressing during another unpredictable year.** This individualized support will be paramount to each region's success. In NFTY-NE, I've been fortunate enough to create these dynamics within the regional TYG programming network.

To end this letter the same way I ended my Regional Board Letter of Intent: If elected, I'll work my absolute hardest to create a positive NFTY experience for all NFTYites.

B'Ahava,
Sam Goldstone