

This year has been challenging, frustrating, and often isolating. It's been a while since we've seen each other ***panim el panim, or face to face***. These are the words in Exodus 33:11 that describe how God speaks to Moses. In this story, God comes down to Moses' level, and they speak as one human speaks to another. God meets Moses *right where he is*, and allows him to feel and truly become an equal.

One of the commentators on this passage, Or HaChaim, says this verse's message is that "the intimacy between Moses and God was in direct proportion to the preparation Moses made to welcome God's presence." This also rings true in the context of our day-to-day lives; to fully welcome each other into our lives, we must first be prepared to accommodate each other's needs. This idea is an integral pillar of NFTY.

From the moment I stepped foot into my first NFTY event, I felt like an equal. Even though I was just a 6th grader at a 6-7-8 event with a bunch of older kids who didn't know me, I felt as though I could meet anyone, talk to anyone, or join any conversation, and truly be a part of it all. I found that NFTYites have an inherent sense of equality with each other, and always find a way to be on the same level, even when we're not in person; NFTY is a community that fosters kindness, understanding, and accommodation to the utmost degree.

These tenets that I found so inspiring at my very first event have grown to become the core of my NFTY leadership and experience. Whether it was serving as my TYG's social action vice president, NFTY-NAR's New York City Subregional Director, or, most recently, as NFTY-NAR's President, I have always tried to distill the ideals of equality and being face to face with every member of my community in the work that I do, as well as in the leaders I work with.

Through this, I have learned that when a community accommodates everyone to the best of its ability, makes every possible attempt to understand each member's needs and wants, and provides every person the opportunity to spread this love, that is when the community can truly thrive. When each and every one of us stands on equal footing and sees each other eye to eye, we become stronger, kinder, and more ready to take on the world. **That is why, with the goal of seeing each and every NFTYite face to face, I, Lev Mosbacher, am excited to announce my candidacy to be NFTY's President for the 5781-5782 year.**

As your President, I will first and foremost make sure that each moment of work I do is filled with the love and understanding that comes with being a member of NFTY. **I am deeply aware of the vast range of needs that each NFTYite has, and will work to make sure that no need, regardless of whether it is financial, social, or emotional, is a barrier to entering NFTY or attending any event.** I will dedicate my leadership to accommodation, providing the space for each and every person, participant, board member, or staff alike, to have their needs heard, and I will put every ounce of my heart into making sure everyone knows that they have the *right* to be heard. This is another irreplaceable step to becoming a stronger, kinder community.

At NFTY Convention 2021, I saw people from every region interacting freely and openly with others, from the East Coast to the West, and everywhere in between. **Conversation and connection with peers from all around the community is another way that we can become stronger and more understanding.** I hope to utilize this reality to heighten the experience of every single member of NFTY, providing opportunities to meet others from across the country. One way this could be accomplished is NFTY affinity groups, virtual collaborations that would provide NFTYites, regardless of location, the opportunity to meet others with shared interests and identities.

Affinity groups are one of the many ways that I will **utilize the opportunities that this post-geographic world of Zoom, Gatherly, and general virtual interaction has provided us.** I will continue to expand on the NFTYx platform, further encouraging everyone from TYG boards to participants to create, plan, and run their own events. I will also put an emphasis on every member of NFTY branching out -- attending other regions' events, meeting people from all around, and forming new bonds. I will ensure that NFTY is **an environment where any person has the opportunity to meet any other member of NFTY.**

Not only is interpersonal connection *within* NFTY paramount to our growth and strength, but so too is NFTY's connections to other national organizations. NFTY is in the process of building these bonds with many organizations, having partnered with Planned Parenthood, the ADL, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and many other organizations at NFTY Convention 2021. I will strengthen these bonds, and continue to partner with these organizations to create a community that can provide even more social, educational, and justice opportunities to NFTYites than ever before. This will enrich our community, as well as providing us the opportunity to create new, unique programming with these partners.

In the end, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the trying times that we are going through. I know that it is easy to feel disconnected from our community, when for so long now, it has been just us and our screens. However, this brings me to my final point, and the one I want to stress most -- **NFTY can be a place where you let that all go.** NFTY is more than just an organization; it is a place where you can see others *panim el panim*. I want to see NFTY thrive, and my main goal as President would be just that. I will do everything in my power to not only keep NFTY moving forward, but to push NFTY into the future of connection, whatever that may look like. Most of all, I want to see NFTY continue to be a place where every member, staff person, and event is accommodating, kind, and understanding.

I am so excited for the opportunity to continue and build on the work of NFTY Presidents past, and to, with your help, realize my vision of a truly connected NFTY, where each and every member feels seen and heard, face to face.

Thank you,
Lev Mosbacher