

Dear NFTY-TOR,

I started my journey with you as a somewhat shy 8th grader who wasn't completely in touch with her Judaism, and you helped transform me into an outspoken and outgoing girl who could not love anything more than the people she's met and the memories she's made in NFTY. Throughout the time I have spent in our community, I have seen NFTY inspire people and mold them into the best versions of themselves. Whether that's through participating in social action programs or getting out of their comfort zones, NFTY changes people for the better. My wish for our region is to create a space where teens have the opportunity to discover who they are and unlock their true potential. These reasons plus more that I can't begin to express are why **I, Eryn Gadd, am excited to declare my candidacy for President for the 5781-5782 NFTY-TOR regional board.**

Our group events are the key to maintaining our TOR community. Even though we currently cannot experience NFTY in person, there are still many ways that we can connect virtually. I want to be at the forefront of this new style NFTY-TOR. While we still have our amazing communities, with all of the changes from this year, it can be hard to make our regional events feel familiar to us- the way they used to feel. That's ok because change is the one constant in life. Implementing new interactive applications such as fun kahoots and Gimkits or hands on crafts will engage TORites and encourage more of them to come to regional events. Along with these new activities, I would also like to give TORites the opportunity to decide which programs they would like to do at events. We would have polls available on our social media so that our members would have a voice in choosing the types of programming they would like to be a part of. This, in turn, would ultimately draw more people to regional events; if they choose the programming, they will come. Additionally, I would introduce a post event survey for online events. Since these events are different from what we are used to, and because certain aspects are difficult to control, anonymous post event surveys will give our regional board insight into what worked and what didn't so we learn from our mistakes and implement change before the next event. This will make events more enjoyable for everyone. Along with improving our virtual events, I would also like to increase the amount of Metro-Area events we hold during the school year. These will give Metro-Area chairs and TYG boards good opportunities to practice their programming and group leadership skills, while also encouraging TORites to participate locally.

Another Idea I would like to present is a Leadership Training Institute, or LTI for short. This program would be a weekend long event where the regional board would train TYG boards, cabinet, and other TORites interested in leadership opportunities. Each member on regional board would bring their corresponding TYG board members and cabinet cohorts to network with them separately (TORites without positions would go where they please). There would be specific time set aside for all cabinet and regional board members to meet and go over responsibilities plus have their own regional board and cabinet cohort time. Throughout this weekend, regional board would work with their group to prepare them for their positions while also providing them with resources to help them succeed. Not only will this increase their productivity throughout the year, but it will also help the leaders with similar positions form bonds throughout their network and with their regional board counterparts. These bonds will become lifelines to grab hold of when problems arise or help is needed.

As president, I'd also like to focus on inclusivity and accessibility. As the world is changing, NFTY-TOR needs to change with it so that all members can have fun and meaningful experiences. For 8th graders who are joining NFTY, entering a big community like ours can be daunting. I would like to have Metro-Area events planned specifically for eighth graders so that they can make new NFTY friends. This will make the transition into our community much easier, and give TYG boards new opportunities to practice programming and experience working with the regional board. I would also like to post information regarding certain parts of programs in advance, along with lyrics for song session and services. These will be available beforehand so that TORites are able to fully participate and enjoy events on a deeper level.

NFTY-TOR, you have played a major role in molding me into the person I am today. You are the reason I keep my Jewish heritage so close to my heart, and why I have the closest friends a person could ask for. Our community is so special, and if I am elected your president, I will do everything in my being to continue to let the love and community of NFTY-TOR reach other Jewish teens around us.

Lassos High,

Evyn Gadd