

Dear NFTY-TOR,

I found out about NFTY at a young age, and I couldn't wait to be a part of this amazing community. In the past few years, NFTY has been all that I had hoped for, and so much more. There are so many things I love about NFTY: the incredible friendships, the exciting programs, and the thoughtful discussions. Unfortunately, there are those who haven't had a chance to see what NFTY has to offer. I am deeply saddened by this fact, because I love NFTY and I want to give everyone the opportunity to have this awesome, life changing experience. **That is why I, Ronen Wenderfer, am declaring my candidacy for President of the 2021-2022 NFTY-TOR Regional Board.**

Over the past year, our world has drastically changed. The in-person events we have enjoyed for so long have been replaced with virtual zoom calls. Despite the difficulties, NFTY-TOR has persisted. In these troubling times, we have continued to stay strong. In the coming months, we will begin the long process of reopening. **In this process of returning to in-person events, I believe it is important to seek input and consider opinions of all TORites.** I propose conducting regional discussions among TYG presidents and advisors to share their respective TYGs' concerns. By doing this, we can work to return to in-person in a way that includes everyone in the decision.

However, as we return to in-person events, we can still continue to take advantage the opportunities we have gained during our time spent in the virtual world. Over next year, I propose we have even more virtual regional programs. These wouldn't be virtual Kallot that require extensive planning, but instead simple virtual get-togethers. This would provide opportunities to connect with TORites in between events and to escape from the stress of school. Some of these virtual programs could be planned and led by TYGs, giving more TORites valuable programming and leadership experience. I also think that we should better utilize teen-adult partnerships. Every NFTYx call is required to have an adult partner. Usually, they are only there to supervise, but I think we should take advantage of this opportunity to bring in people who have something to add to our conversation. While this year has been difficult, it has also given us opportunities for expanding our NFTY-TOR community, strengthening us as we begin to reunite in person.

Although NFTY has made it through the obstacle course of 2020, our community is not as big as it once was. **I believe that we must rebuild and expand our connections on the TYG, Regional, and Area levels.** On the TYG level, I want to work with temples to give TYGs a bigger role in religious schools and services. This would help TYGs to expand their presence in their temple and recruit new members. Additionally, I want to work individually with each TYG to set overall goals for the year, as well as smaller goals that would help accomplish the larger goal. On the regional level, I want to create a NFTY-TOR Remind thread, which would send out occasional notifications, such as letting TORites know when registration has opened for an event. When we return to in-person weekend events at GFC, this Remind could be used to give schedule reminders throughout the event. I also want to create GroupMe "Cabins" for virtual events. Similar to cabins at camp, participants would be put into groups with people whom they requested, as well as new people for them to become friends with. Finally, I want to build connections with our fellow South Area regions. This includes sharing program ideas and songs, as well as virtual Area-wide programs. One thing I think will help unite the South Area is a South Area cheer. This would go in between the main cheer and the TOR cheer, and it would

show the rest of NFTY the strength of the South Area. While these ideas would require the approval of several other regions, I think that they would be great ways of showing other regions everything that makes us in TOR special.

In the past year, inclusion has become a big focus of NFTY as a whole, and I want to continue this focus. **We like to say that NFTY-TOR is an inclusive community, but building such a community requires a conscious effort to make sure everyone feels like they belong.** This means not just adapting to needs as they come up, but anticipating and planning for those needs, such as creating quiet alternative programs during loud or overwhelming programs or keeping program locations close together at in-person events. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that NFTY is a diverse community with many different political beliefs, and we must be accepting and welcoming to people who have beliefs other than ours.

Finally, I want to work on raising a new generation of NFTY leaders. I want to continue the training webinars we had last summer, adding recruitment training and practice webinars. Many of NFTY-TOR's newest leaders do not know what program format is, so I want to have webinars to teach TYG leaders how they can use in-person and virtual program format to make their TYG events even more successful. TORites could then use this new knowledge to plan and lead NFTY678 programs, which would give them valuable leadership experience and bring middle schoolers into NFTY.

This past year has been a challenge and there will be many more challenges as we emerge from the pandemic over the coming year. It will not be easy, but I am excited to take on these challenges with you, NFTY-TOR. Through all the troubles of quarantine, NFTY and my NFTY friends have been there for me. Now, I want to give back to NFTY-TOR and help others the way NFTY has helped me. In NFTY, we are able to come together to make a difference in the world. It is impossible to put into words all the good NFTY does, and so I would be honored to serve as your 5781-5782 NFTY-TOR President.

Lassos High,
Ronen Wenderfer, Ronen