

Dear NFTY-NW,

Ruach, The NFTY-NW mascot. The infamous story of the raindrop has been spread far and wide over his lifespan. Starting off as the NFTY-Westy* regional mascot, Ruach was adopted by NFTY-NW when Westy was broken up in 1994. Now most people view the adoption of Ruach by the Northwest as arbitrary; raindrops go with the rain. However, there is another reason. Ruach is the hebrew word for spirit, and NFTY-NW prides itself as having the absolute best in the country.

NFTY-NW, you have done so much more for me than each of you will ever know. An Arizona transplant, lost in a new state, I was engulfed and engendered into a loving community. NFTY; when most people see this acronym, they think “North American Federation of Temple Youth”. But when I hear those famed four words, I think of another four: HOME. I want every person who goes through our programs to feel the same way. That is why **I, Gabe Levy, declare my candidacy for the role of NFTY-NW President, 5780-5781.**

Going back to our beloved mascot, Ruach stands for one of NFTY’s 13 guiding principles. While as a region, we excel at certain principles, I plan to emphasize some should you elect me as your President.

Community, Kehilah– Although we currently have a thriving community full of fantastic individuals, our registration numbers have been slowly declining. I want to see our region thrive in the future, which is why I am emphasizing a **strengthening of 6/7/8 events**. Although the task may seem miniscule, it is essential to introduce the values of NFTY to young Jews so they will be interested and encapsulated enough to join NFTY for years to come. There needs to be an increase across the board in all activities relating to NFTY 6/7/8. We need to increase the marketing of the region and the way teens learn about NFTY. If elected, I will work with major temples in the Northwest to outline paths for early and consistent engagement in NFTY. After all, students are more likely to come back to events if they have already had great experiences in NFTY at an early age. Throughout the next year, there will be more time and effort put towards not only the preparation of the events, but the following up as well. NFTY can collect more data on events and participants. Whether it be through suggestion boxes, post event surveys, atmosphere toning or more, I hope to encourage the regional board to do anything and everything possible to increase engagement.

Partnership, Shutfut– An important aspect of this principle is ensuring the vibrancy of the Reform Movement. While I see passionate Jewish teens every day, I worry for the future of NFTY. Over the past few years, we have witnessed the URJ** and NFTY do great things, thanks to the hardworking youth who dedicate their efforts towards bettering the organization. **This fire will never die out**. We need to invigorate future leaders in our region to make sure our organizations keep doing great things. To help bring these leaders forward, I want to rejuvenate our TYG*** involvement. Through the next year, I want to personally venture to temples across our region to not only attend TYG events, but to meet the attendees. There are many great leaders hidden throughout our temples and I see it as my job to help identify these passionate youths and

help to bring them to NFTY on a scale larger than just my own temple. In total, our decline in membership on the regional level has been felt by individual TYGs as well. **We are in this together.** If elected, much of my time will be spent communicating with local TYG leaders discussing how we can improve NFTY's participation on both a local and regional level. Harboring these connections between the TYG and regional levels is something that NFTY-NW was built upon which I plan on emphasizing, so that we can blossom into the future.

History, Midor L'Dor– NFTY-NW has been endowed with a rich culture and history not readily found in other regions. Something that I want to incorporate into our regional history is subregional events. **Creating popup events is something that our region is currently lacking.** Because of the lengthy amount of time in between events, there becomes a disconnect between participants and the region. In metropolitan population hubs, I will encourage the incoming regional board to work with local TYGs to have night events at their local areas. Whether it be bowling, escape rooms, kickball or anything else the region wants to do, small events within the region can be extremely beneficial to not only the participants, but to the region's success as a whole. Participation in popup events relates back to the idea of expanding TYGs in the partnership of the planning. Working with these leaders, we can create more events to help each one of us have more NFTY in our lives.

In all, NFTY-NW is still a thriving region. However, we need to get in front of our problems before they overwhelm us. As a region, there is cause for concern in membership. I love each and every person who goes through the NFTY-NW program, and I want to make sure there will be even more people to meet in years to come. I want to stay conscious for the years to come and keep the future in mind for our region. The membership issue we have seen will take more than one year to fix. As your president, I hope to induce these ideas over this year to see the future of the region prosper.

B'ahava,
Gabe Levy

* NFTY-Westy was one of the original NFTY regions, consisting of the entire western seaboard.

** URJ stands for Union for Reform Judaism

*** TYG stands for Temple Youth Group