

Dear NFTY-NW,

My name is Sydney Somers and I am running to be your Membership Vice President (MVP). From a very young age, I had always looked forward to attending these NFTY events. In my eyes, NFTY has always been about creating and strengthening connections with Jewish peers. Although these past few years have been quite unusual, I have worked hard to stay involved with my temple youth group (BATY) and am currently serving as a Co-President of my high school's Jewish Student Union. Having a safe space to grow and connect with other Jewish teens, while continuing to learn and explore my faith is important to me. If elected as your MVP, I'll strive to continue to build up this wonderful organization and the warm and welcoming environment we all value so much in NFTY-NW.

I plan on working with the Communications Vice President (CVP) to advertise NFTY 678 events, because they are a very important way to increase membership. I believe one key way to increase attendance at these events is to advertise them on social media. The reality is that most 6th, 7th and 8th graders have access to social media, so we should definitely use that to our advantage. If you look at the NFTY-NW instagram page, there are countless reminders about events such as Fall Kallah and Tri-Temple, however there are no posts about 678 events. If we advertised the 678 events similarly, we could reach so many kids and get them excited about their future with NFTY.

As someone who started coming to NFTY events late, I know exactly how hard it can be to try and find your place. One of my goals is to make that a little easier by **setting up a Kehila Crew**. This crew would be made up of hand-picked NFTY veterans who are excellent at making our new friends feel included. Each kehilah leader would be assigned a small group of new kids to welcome, answer any questions and make the teen feel safe. The new NFTY member would also receive a welcome bag containing fun items like a NFTY-NW sticker, and more meaningful things such as their first event chain, a card with the iconic NFTY-NW cheer, and a personalized letter welcoming them into our *kehila kedosha*. With my Kehilah Crew, new members would have a connection with a NFTY mentor to give them an idea of what to expect and welcome them into this new and exciting chapter in their lives!

Let's bring back a welcome tradition, or special event to initiate new members! When I was in 4th grade, I remember hearing about my 8th grade friends getting "kidnapped" by NFTY. To this day, I have no idea what really actually happened. What I DO know is that I was SO excited for it to be my turn. This mysterious night was hyped up so much that little 4th grade Sydney could not wait until it was her turn. Unfortunately, when it was finally my turn, I was absent from religious school. My point is, this event was extremely popular, and got everyone at my temple interested in joining NFTY. I would love to bring something like this back. If elected, I would create **a night just for the 8th graders**, so memorable, younger kids would wait with anticipation and the 8th graders would be counting the days until Fall Kallah. The 8th graders are a really vital group to reach in order to increase membership, and if we are able to draw them in with an amazing, memorable night just for them, we could continue to really grow our organization.

I would be honored to serve as your 5782-5783 Membership Vice President and help NFTY-NW reach new heights!

Sincerely,
Sydney Somers