

I will never forget walking off the bus at my first NFTY event in 6th grade. The energy our region gave off when I stepped onto the pavement of URJ Kutz Camp made me feel like a true celebrity. Throughout the weekend, I made tons of new friends, sang loudly during song session and services, and even cried at friendship circle. When we loaded the buses to go home on Sunday morning, I knew I wouldn't be a stranger to NFTY-GER and would attend many events in the future.

I continue to look back on my first NFTY event and how it has greatly impacted my life for the better. Since then, my leadership skills have grown, I've continued to make memories at the plethora of NFTY events I have attended, and I have learned more about myself as a person and as a leader. Because the Garden Empire Region has such a special place in my heart, I would be honored to lead it with other passionate Jewish teens. This is why **I, Liam Klass, declare my candidacy to serve as the NFTY-GER President for the 5780-5781 year.**

My past years of leadership experience, both on the local and regional levels, have qualified me to run for this important position. I have served on my Temple Youth Group board, RTSY, as the Membership Vice President and Programming Vice President for my freshman and sophomore years respectively. I also worked with a committee to develop programming for Taste of NFTY last year as the NFTY 678 Liaison on the NFTY-GER cabinet. Currently, I am serving as the NFTY-GER Programming Vice President and truly enjoy the meaningful work that goes into creating and overseeing each program on a high school level.

If elected, I will work to strengthen the bonds between the members of our community through teen engagement and empowerment. Some ideas I plan on bringing to the region include:

**Temple Youth Groups:** Teen engagement almost always begins at the local level. We must strengthen TYG participation before we can begin to grow as a region. I plan on working with the regional board and TYGs across the Garden Empire Region to solve this issue through a program called "TYG of the Month." Each month, a different TYG will be represented on the various NFTY-GER social media platforms. On the day of the event, the TYG will be able to take over the NFTY-GER Instagram and share their experiences with the rest of the region.

**Recruitment:** Our region cannot function without the loyal participants that fuel it. In order to maximize our domain of recruitment, the regional board and cabinet should recruit from their local synagogues. I plan on working with the Recruitment Vice President to create resources for leaders to utilize on these trips. By visiting different

temples we can provide teens with the opportunity to learn more about our region and what it has to offer.

**Pop Ups:** Pop ups have proven to be effective, low barrier opportunities for teens to immerse themselves in NFTY-GER culture without committing to a full day or weekend-long event. I will work with the regional board to create pop ups in each subregion throughout the year for GERites to hang out and introduce their friends to our region.

**Midyear Mifgash:** Each year, the regional board together with the cabinet do not have many opportunities to meet with each other and discuss pertinent information regarding the future of our region. I plan on working with the Senior Regional Director to plan a midyear mifgash (meeting) to discuss the pros and cons of regional events thus far. We will also be able to brainstorm and set goals for the rest of the program year. This will give both groups of leadership a chance to discuss important information in an informal fashion and will include aspects of Kef V'ruach, fun and spirit.

**Feedback:** While I would like to continue getting feedback through post-event surveys, I plan on starting a series of Feedback Zoom Calls after each event. These informal calls would allow participants to voice their opinions about what they liked and disliked about the event. They would also allow for participants to gather in a safe space and reminisce about the memories they created during the event.

Our region has come a long way and we have continued to build up our legacy. Airplanes, shoe monkeys, Snifty Snakes, and screaming Let Nations at Havdalah are just some of the many traditions we respect and appreciate in our region. What will you contribute to our legacy during your time in NFTY-GER? Though it is important to maintain our current traditions, it is crucial that we as a region come together to create new ones. NFTY-GER, let's continue to create our unique legacy for the future generations of GERites to remember us by.

With love,  
Liam Klass