

NFTY is all about connections, *ksharim*. One Jewish teen connecting to another. A local TYG connecting to the entire region. An individual connecting to god. Through *kesher*, NFTY provides Jewish teenagers the opportunity to connect in many ways, leading to unforgettable experiences. Through this idea of connection, the NFTY-MAR community will continue to be a place where teens can meet like-minded individuals and explore their Judaism in a safe space.

I, Ari Cogen, am honored to declare my candidacy for the position of your 5779-5780 NFTY-MAR Communications Vice President. As CVP, I intend to keep NFTY-MAR a place where teens can take a break from their everyday lives and get to have a great experience as a Jewish teen. In addition, I want NFTY to continue to be a place where Jewish teens feel welcome, included, and free to be themselves without any judgement; where you can be YOU, and everyone is accepted for who they truly are. I also plan to hear the ideas, opinions, and feedback from fellow NFTY-ites to understand what they think of our current programs and how we can improve them. It is very important that NFTY-ites find value and purpose in what they are learning and talking about in the programs. New NFTY-ites should feel connected to NFTY-MAR, other NFTY-ites, and Judaism. I want to make sure everyone feels welcome, included, and like they have a place in MAR and encourage people to take opportunities and try things they might not consider trying. For example: song leading, participating in group discussions, and leading programs.

Being on regional board comes with many responsibilities. I am a great fit for the position because I listen to other's ideas and opinions and can create a mutual resolution. I am very easy-going, a good listener, and someone who can communicate ideas and thoughts clearly to others. Being someone who loves photography and videography, I am a great fit for the position of CVP because I have a very creative mindset which is key for creating content, when it comes to leading the M&Ms, I am very good at engaging with people by asking questions, hearing their ideas and opinions, and getting them to think about the situation or task at hand, and I have a lot of experience with communicating and engaging with people through social media.

With this such experience with communication and engagement through social media, I will use social media and/or email as a method to contact and inform every TYG in the region. I want to make sure that every TYG is informed about upcoming kallahs or sub-regional events because it is important to me that NFTY-ites are as involved as they can be. Using a Facebook group, Instagram group chat, or email group, I will be able to easily contact members from every TYG in our region, making sure people know when events are.

Balancing being both a peer and board member will be a transition; since I will be on board and people look up to me, I will have to be more conscientious of my actions. However, I will be making new friends on board, and I will still be around my friends at events. I will have to take into consideration that I have more responsibilities now and I am a role model to the entire region.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ari Cogen