

Dear NFTY-MAR,

Before Valentine's day 2018, I was a quiet middle schooler who could not care less about social action. I used to think, "there are a lot of terrible things happening in the world, but I do not have the power to change anything," I was tremendously incorrect. After 17 innocent students and teachers were gunned down at Marjory Stoneman Douglass High School, my world view changed forever. I remember thinking, "that could have just as easily been at my school" and "someone I love could have just as easily been one of the 17". The Parkland shooting was the last straw that inspired me, and thousands of teens across the country, to stand up and take action to end gun violence. On March 14, I led 200 students at my school in the "#ENOUGH National Walkout". Since then, I have been extremely and increasingly motivated to stand up against injustice whenever I see it. Two days after the national walkout, I attended my first real NFTY event: TheVent 2018. I remember being amazed by the tight-knit community of teens just like me who were equally as passionate about repairing the world, and they had fun while doing it. I was extremely excited to have the opportunity to make a difference while making some of the most amazing friends I have ever had. I told myself that I was going to be as involved in the NFTY-MAR community as I possibly could be.

**With this love of activism and the NFTY-MAR community as a whole, I humbly declare my candidacy for the 5780-5781 NFTY-MAR Social Action Vice President.**

As NFTY-MAR's Social Action Chair for the past two years, a member of the 2019-2020 NFTY-MAR Food Waste Prevention Task Force, one of the 2020 Western MSACs, the founder/president of Loudoun Students Demand Action, and as a L'taken, Mechina, and URJ Camp Harlam Alum, I feel that I am uniquely qualified to be NFTY-MAR's SAVP. As SA Chair, I've worked closely with two different SAVPs, helped write and lead multiple social action programs, worked on member outreach, and considerably improved my leadership and teamwork skills. My platform consists of The Three I's: Interactive, Inclusive, and Inspiring.

- 1. Interactive:** As Social Action Vice President, I would ensure that every social action program is interactive and hands-on. While discussion-oriented programs are important, I acknowledge that some MARites are not very interested in social action and they might consider some discussion-heavy programs to be "boring". For this reason, the best Social Action Programs should be able to be described as "fun". Whether it is a simulation, a rally, or a game, I believe that interactive programs like these are not only more fun, but they are also more memorable and impactful. After all, a social action program would have little to no impact if the participants zone out and forget the program. In order to maximize the amount of change we can make as a region, it is important that every MARite is fully engaged and perceptive.
- 2. Inclusive:** NFTY-MAR is a diverse community, and it is crucial that every aspect of every program represents that. Every MARite is passionate about different issues,

therefore I believe that the region should decide which social justice issues we focus each program on. At the beginning of the year, the inclusion chair(s), the social action chair(s), and I would post an optional survey on NFTY-MAR's social media accounts that would ask each MARite which social justice issues they care the most about. The survey would also ask the participant whether or not they would like to help write and/or lead programs or social action initiatives about the issues that they are passionate about. The social action chair(s) and I would also use the data from this survey to group together MARites who are passionate about similar issues into different single-issue task forces. I would also utilize the inclusion chair(s) to ensure that every MARite feels welcome and comfortable throughout all of our events.

- 3. Inspiring:** The goal of every social action initiative should not only be to inform participants about an issue, but to also motivate and inspire them to take action after the program is complete. The social action chair(s) and I would work closely with the RAC and with TYGs to provide concrete action steps after each social action program. For example, if a program focuses on plastic pollution, then the participants could be provided with the resources to lobby their legislators for a ban on single-use plastic. After this hypothetical program, TYGs also could be provided with a follow-up program that involves volunteering to clean up a local park.

The NFTY-MAR community is truly the most kind, welcoming, and hype group of people that I have ever met. MAR has given me some of the best friends that I have ever had as well as some amazing opportunities to make a real change in the world. I would be honored to continue this trend of positivity and activism with all of you by my side.

L'Shalom,  
Jacob Wesoky