

We, as Jewish teens, have an abundance of opportunity to feel strength inside of ourselves. Whether it be regarding school, our hobbies, Judaism, or anything really, we can all find ourselves if we are immersed into something greater. In NFTY, each individual that makes up our community, each interaction had, each memory is greater than ourselves. By “greater than ourselves,” I refer to how we soar so high while we are together and how we reach new heights after we meet. The achievement I am discussing is not solely a physical thing we can reach, rather, the development of our mind, our community bond, and how that impacts who we are outside of the safe haven that is MAR.

I want to show everyone their incredible potential and how accessible it truly is. **I, Linnie Ulick, am so happy to be running for NFTY-MAR’s Religious and Cultural Vice President for the 5780-5781 year!** There are two areas that are wonderful but I think we can further ourselves in: **spiritual entanglement and religion/Jewish culture beyond services.** These specific aspects of my platform encourage something greater than ourselves! They inspire **exploration and, what I like to call, “it” moments.** I believe it to be important for myself to incorporate the big meaning of my platform into how I work with the fellow board members. I would help create an environment of support and respect so that when we work together there is a sense of openness in our team. As a board member, I’d balance myself as a leader and a peer by upholding the MAR values and by not closing myself off to anyone in the region.

It is so special that we can be ourselves here but I’d like to create times where we can be vulnerable and discuss and pray in ways that **bring us closer together on a spiritual level** such as continuing the balance between unique and traditional services. Traditional URJ-style services are something that we all relate to but I’d like to pursue some unorthodox ways of worship that will really get us thinking about the **what’s and why’s of prayer.** Some ways of implementing this could include more meditation services, connecting with nature, even the region breaking up to make a product revealing what an aspect of services means to them. Another thing that I want to incorporate is that the people on Board or Cabinet will not always be the sole leaders; that anyone could share their ideas whether they have an idea for a service or would like to read something to the region. It is so special to me to be able to collaborate and see a person’s or group’s idea manifest into something for others to cherish. **I want this spiritual entanglement to be an opportunity to shine individually and as a whole region.**

There is sometimes a misconception that Jewish identity is solely within worship and practice, but **a goal of mine is to show that your Jewish identity can be embraced in a multitude of ways.** If you’re the type of person who connects to prayer, that’s awesome. If you’re someone who does or doesn’t believe in G-d, that’s awesome. If you don’t know how you connect to Judaism or don’t believe that you do... that’s also awesome. We’re all different; there’s not always a chance to find ourselves with the conventional services or programs, some relate and some don’t. **Beyond services, I would implement more programs that guide MARites to explore places in their mind they didn’t know of.** Some program themes would include: different perspectives of Israel education, interfaith learning, importance of Jewish values, or what it means to be a Jew today. Also, I want us to continue a religious bond by these programs being both collaborative and independent. **A Jewish identity, or any identity for that matter, is very accessible, but I want everyone to have a chance of exploring that.**

By having a mixture of new and traditional services as well as challenging and comforting programs, we can be guided in a community that supports us. Partaking in

religion in ways that you both relate or don't quite connect to, and realizing that the whole region is in the same boat, allows us to come together. And in this amazing bond that is already within the region, it will become stronger. This enables impactful moments where you leave the weekend feeling refreshed. You leave the weekend bringing home an unforgettable memory that you can look back on, reminding you of your identity, your teenage years, NFTY; just something meaningful to you. **I want to spread these feelings, memories, and "it" moments not in abundance, but in times and places where we may not expect them, because that is when you will be impacted the greatest.**

I can't wait to be *spiritually entangled* with you all!

L'Shalom NFTY-MAR,

Linnie Ulick