

Shalom NFTY-MAR

When my journey with NFTY began back in 8th grade, I had no idea where it would lead me. I was not involved in the Jewish community and dreaded going to any kind of service. Nervous, scared, and young, I decided to reach out to my TYG president at the time and see if there were any positions left on board that needed to be filled, which is why I quickly took up the position of Communications Chair. I soaked up meetings like a sponge, and quickly found my niche within my TYG. The next year I decided that it was time for a step up in responsibility and was elected CVP of TRSTY. Soon into my term, I was met with the pandemic and had to incorporate flexibility in how I did things. Although it was extremely challenging, it better equipped me for anything new or different that could happen in the coming year.

During my three years on TRSTY board, I learned many important things that will help me as regional CVP. I learned how to be flexible and creative, I learned that change is not a bad thing, and I learned how to balance my responsibilities. But I believe that the most important lesson that I learned was how to be on board while simultaneously being a good participant. Writing and leading programs for events is exciting, but so is being a participant. When you give someone the opportunity to lead or write a program, you get to experience it in a whole new way and learn new things. Being a participant allows you to get to know the other NFTY members, not as a leader, but as a friend. In order to continue to strengthen NFTY-MAR as a community, **I, Shayna Richman, declare my candidacy to be your 5781-5782 Communications Vice President.**

There are lots of things that can be done to improve NFTY-MAR, but given our circumstances, many of these ideas are unattainable. That is why I propose we start small. I will implement meetings that occur twice a month with CVPs that make up the MAR community. These meetings will be a space to help the CVPs of the region. Whether it is bouncing ideas off of each other, a place to relax and hang out, or a workshop to improve the skills of being CVP, no matter what happens, these calls will keep the region's CVPs connected and promote connection throughout the TYG network.

Something else that I would do as CVP is work closely with the SAVP to implement an upcycling program for old NFTY merch. Having lived with a prior NFTY-MAR CVP, I know the vast amount of merch that sits in storage in between events. I asked myself the question, "What happens to the old merch?" Instead of wondering about this, I want to change the answer to, "It was donated to homeless shelters within the region of NFTY-MAR." There are many ways of upcycling clothes that are cost, time, and energy-efficient. Donating the clothing that goes unsold within our region is a way that I will implement giving back to the community at large.

Lastly, I will hold open office hours for the people of NFTY-MAR. This won't be your regular run-of-the-mill school office hours. Over the upcoming year, I would like to set up open office hours bi-monthly as a way to ask questions, get advice, and get to know the other people in the region. These office hours would be open to all members of our region and be on an opt-in basis to incorporate more of the unstructured social time we would normally have in person. Having open office hours will allow NFTY to keep growing and changing as it would during a normal year. During these times, it is even more important to have a safe place to ask questions and get help, and this would help provide just that.

There are many unknown things about the future of NFTY such as how this pandemic will shape and change our region. NFTY-MAR has been such an important part of my high school career, and if elected, I will work my hardest to keep the region connected and promote growth. Through the ideas I have presented, I am certain that we as a community will be stronger than ever.

Thank you,
Shayna Richman (*She/Her*)