

Dear NFTY-MAR,

In 8th grade, I was convinced by Karen Shy to attend MAJYK. When I got there, current President Joe Lichtenstein immediately came over and started talking to me; even though we had just met, he was so inclusive and made me feel like I belonged. At the end of the event, he made sure that I was coming to TheVent and made sure that current members of DRTY– my temple youth group–convinced me to come. Because of Joe’s friendliness, I gained a home and a family. And because of Joe, I have created friendships and bonds with people I never would have met. **With the love and support that I have gained from this community, I am excited to declare my candidacy for Regional President for the 2022-2023 year.**

During my tenure in NFTY, I have been the SAVP for 2 years and the President for 1 year of DRTY. Outside of NFTY, I have managed my high school cross country and track teams, been a madrich for 2 years, and attended 3 Religious Action Center Social Justice Academy Sessions. During my time in these leadership positions, I’ve found the joys in challenging myself and solving difficult problems that once solved allow others have an enjoyable and memorable experience, and help them connect to the community.

At the start of the year with DRTY we set a goal of gaining more membership and getting near where we had been pre-COVID. DRTYstruggled with attendance over the pandemic year and set a goal of trying to rebound to pre-COVID numbers. This year as President I had to find new ways to get people to try coming to an event and that taught me certain skills about persevering to make sure the year continues to be successful. With the other leaders of DRTY, I was able to exceed our target and have a more successful year than pre-COVID times. Through this experience, I foundthat the goals you set are not what you aim for but what you aim to push past. This experience has equipped me with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to continue making this region better in the coming year after surviving the pandemic and the damage it caused and to push past the goals we set to make MAR the best that we can.

As President, my biggest goal will be to not only recruit new MARites but to make sure that the new MARites find it easy to be engaged and easy to connect with the community. A path to attain this goal is to extend the time people talk during group programs to allow the participants to connect with people they don't know and to have the opportunity to form new bonds and create friendships that can last a lifetime. Another way to achieve that goal will be to utilize subregional days and make them as impactful as possible because it is less intimidating for a new member to commit to one day instead of a weekend event. At that event, it will also be easier to get to know other individuals because of the smaller scale of the events.

Another goal will be helping TYG's build their member bases by providing support to local Presidents if they need or want help trying to recruit new members. When I was SAVP my freshman year Lee Smith created a SAVP group chat to connect all the SAVP's across the region. I would follow that model by not only creating a network to easily connect Presidents so that they can share strategies, but also trying to hold monthly meetings where Presidents can come to learn how other TYG's are recruiting members as well as being able to ask me questions about ways to make NFTY seem more enjoyable and inviting. I will also encourage the rest of the NFTY-MAR board to do the same with their TYG equivalents.

NFTY-MAR has always been a community that provides people with a home and a place to be themselves. Every person who has ever been a part of MAR has helped create the community that we are now able to be a part of and **being your President would be the greatest honor**, as I would have the opportunity to help the region continue to have this unbelievable community that has been there for so many when others were not.

לקהילה (to community)

Henry Barron