

NFTY-SW

New Member Packet

Everything you **NEED** to Know,
But Were Afraid to Ask



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Adapted from:

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NFTY-SW 05-06 Regional Board

New NFTY-SW member

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Welcome to the NFTY-SW

My name is David Siegal and I am your regional Membership Vice President. Many years ago, the regional board compiled information to make this "New Member Packet" and I have continued this tradition by updating it for this year.

In this packet, you will find information about what it means to be a NFTYite and part of your region. No one really gets NFTY at first (I definitely had no idea why all these people were so excited at my first event, Fall Kallah 2008!) but this packet will help you understand. It contains everything you need to know about NFTY-SW including traditions, a dictionary, event summaries, and a 2011-2012 calendar. Looking through this packet will give you a glimpse of all the amazing things that NFTY has to offer you.

Signing up for Fall Kallah is the start of an experience that will change your life forever. NFTY will soon become a part of who you are, not just an organization to which you belong. NFTY will help you discover yourself as a Jewish teen through learning about your religion, your community, and yourself. Although the education and religious experiences are important, the true heart of NFTY lies in the relationships you will form. Welcome to your new home in NFTY-SW!

David Siegal

What is NFTY??

NFTY stands for North American Federation of Temple Youth which is the Union for Reform Judaism's (**URJ**) movement of teen youth. For over 60 years NFTY has been letting Jewish teens express themselves in many ways. Through **programming** and Jewish studies NFTY has created a movement in which Jewish teens can escape the troubles of High School and met some of the most amazing and influencing people in their lives.

NFTY starts at the local level in which Temple Youth Groups (**TYGs**) are formed and run. NFTY is not just local youth groups it is much more than that; it is what takes place on the North American level or at the Regional Events, which every TYG is in apart of. There are 19 **regions** across North America. We are in NFTY southwest; which is composed of New Mexico, Arizona, as well as El Paso, Texas and Las Vegas, Nevada (of course).

NFTY is a youth run organization, meaning that all the events and programs are planned by leaders, who are also teens and elected by their fellow NFTYites. These elected leaders, which are know as **regional board** members create and run all the Regional events. That means they plan and write all the programs, services, and torah studies. They can't do it all alone though; they have a **regional advisor** in which helps them with all the organizing and planning that goes into a regional event. Without an advisor events wouldn't be able to happen.

Besides all the great learning and wonderful leadership opportunities NFTY provides young teens with, it give Jewish teens a fantastic way to meet other teens just like them! Some of the most amazing friendships are created in NFTY, and honestly that is what makes it so much more than just a Jewish teen organization. Not only does NFTY form amazing bonds, but it also truly helps build a Jewish identity in young teens and give them a true sense of home!

***all bolded words have more descriptive definitions on the dictionary page of the packet!**

NFTY's History

Once upon a time...

NFTY was first created in 1939 with only three regions (today there are 19! More about them later...): Pennsylvania, Chicago, and New York. It was run pretty differently than today, as it was open to college-aged students instead of high school students. In 1948, a giant convention was held which made major structural changes to NFTY, lowering the age bracket to high schoolers.

NFTY opened its very first camp in 1951! This camp, the Olin-Sang Ruby Union Institute (OSRUI! that's oz-roo-ee) located in Wisconsin, served as a leadership training center for NFTY-ites. Today, several URJ camps all over the continent in almost every region are second summer homes to kids as young as 7 or 8 to high school to staffers in college and beyond!

In the 1960s, there were many innovative changes made to NFTY. The Eisendrath International Exchange (EIE), an exchange program which sends NFTY-ites to spend 4 months living and studying in Israel, was started in 1961. Kutz Camp was bought in 1965 as the leadership training home base for the entire NFTY movement!

You know all those songs that you've heard during services, song sessions, and even in your congregation at home? Many of those originated from the incredible song-writing explosion of this era, as well. More and more people started learning the guitar and integrating Hebrew and English into songs with lyrics that inspired them, transforming generations of Reform Jewish youth music.

In 1983, NFTY reintroduced a national event that hadn't occurred from the very earliest of its roots- a national convention! Held in Washington, D.C. that year, Convention gathers over a thousand NFTY-ites to pray, sing, dance, learn, and have an amazing time. Sounds awesome? Oh it is.

In 1993, NFTY and the Association of Reform Zionists in America (ARZA) formalized their relationship, further committing NFTY to Israel and to North American Zionist activity.

Recently (Convention 2005, to be exact), NFTY joined forces with Netzer Olami, the International Progressive Judaism Youth Movement. Netzer is an acronym in Hebrew for **Noar Tzioni Reformi**, or Reform Zionist Youth. NFTY is a *snif* or branch of Netzer, which has other branches from Australia to England to South Africa.

Sixty years later, NFTY is still going strong! NFTY can take pride in being a major influence in many of today's Reform Jewish leadership across the world. Thousands of kids each year go on NFTY summer trips, programs, attend regional events, and are active in their TYGs.

NFTY Regions

 (yeah, we're everywhere!)



There are 19 regions across the continent that make up NFTY. NFTY- SW includes all of Arizona, New Mexico, Las Vegas, and El Paso. All of the regions meet together for Convention which will be held in 2009! Below is how the continent is divided up!

- NFTY- CAR: Chicago Area Region
- NFTY-CWR: Central West Region
- NFTY-GER: Garden Empire Region
- NFTY-MAR: Mid-Atlantic Region
- NFTY-MI: Michigan
- NFTY-MV: Missouri Valley
- NFTY-NAR: New York Area Region
- NFTY-NE: Northeast
- NFTY-NEL: Northeast Lakes
- NFTY-NO: Northern
- NFTY-OV: Ohio Valley
- NFY-PAR: Pennsylvania Area Region
- NFTY-SAR: Southern Area Region
- NFTY-SO: Southern
- NFTY-SoCal: Southern California Region
- NFTY-STR; Southern Tropical Region
- NFTY-SW: Southwest
- NFTY-TOR: Texas Oklahoma Region

Who are those kids leading Southwest events anyways?

Board Positions Job Descriptions:

President: The President delegates all responsibility, and thus does nothing. At the same time, a president is aware of all that is happening and makes sure it gets done well, thus doing everything. The key to being president is maintaining a balance between the two.

Programming Vice President (PVP): Being a PVP is very hard because programming is a technique. The objective is to create a well written program so that everyone in your region learns something, but at the same time it should also entertain everyone.

Social Action Vice President (SAVP): Social Action is one of the most far-reaching aspects of NFTY and regional activities as it affects not only us but the world around us. Social Action is the responsibility all of us have as members of NFTY, as Jews, and as concerned citizens of the earth to make our world better. The role of the SAVP is to make everyone in their region aware of this and to help them take action.

Religious and Cultural Vice President (RCVP): Our religion is the thing that binds NFTY together. We are all high school aged Jews coming together for a weekend to learn, grow, and make amazing friends. It is the RCVP's responsibility to keep that Jewish connection alive in a region -- to make services traditional but also add a spark to it to make it different. It is also the RCVP's job to remind us of our culture and where we are from because it is our heritage and it should never be forgotten.

Membership Vice President (MVP): NFTY and all of the regions can not exist without members. It is what makes NFTY what it is. It is the MVP's role to go and find potential members working with the TYG MVP's looking at the 7th and 8th graders at all of the temples. Another important aspect of being an MVP is to keep the members that we have.

Communications Vice President (CVP): A region is nothing if there is no communication and no one knows when and where events are taking place. It is the CVP's job to make sure that everyone is updated on the happenings of the region whether it's by email, flyers, or phone calls. The CVP is also like the "designer" of the region. They are in charge of creating and making all of the cool NFTY attire that is sold at all regional events.

*Each one of these positions is very essential for a region.
No position is more important than the other and all are needed
to have a successful and an amazing year in NFTY.*

Everything 2011-2012!

NFTY-SW Regional Board

President:

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Regional Advisor

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General Board

Head Song Leader:

Editor:

Historian:

Ruach Chair:

Zach Kaplan

Rachel Goldberg

Hillary Lorsch

Miranda Rosen

What do we do at these things called events?

NFTY-SW Regional Event Summaries

Leadership Training Institute (LTI)

LTI was held in Phoenix, Arizona this year. The focus of the weekend is a series of leadership programs aimed for current and future members of TYG boards, including effective programming, group dynamics, and communications skills. However, there is time for social activities! Regional board members as well as staff and advisors program this event. All TYG board members are encouraged to attend.

Fall Kallah

This event is the first event full sized of the year. It is held in Las Vegas, Nevada. This event is mainly comprised of thematic programming and an introduction of NFTY themes for the upcoming year. Much of it is geared towards new members, but song sessions, services, social action, and free time all help returning members feel at home.

Social Action Weekend (SAW)

This year, we are happy to announce that Social Action Weekend will be held in sunny Phoenix, AZ! This weekend is devoted to Tikkun Olam, repairing the world around us. In addition to the usual services and thematic programs, each NFTYite ventures out into the city to participate in social action projects. This provides a fabulous opportunity for youth to have fun with friends while helping with Tikkun Olam B'Shem Adonai (Repairing the World in the Name of Adonai).

Spring Kallah and Elections

The final official NFTY-SW event of the year is Spring Kallah and Elections where we say goodbye to seniors and the old executive board and welcome the new executive board. Friday focuses on elections for the up and coming regional board, and installations are Saturday night. Thematic programs comprise the remaining time. Senior Circle is held on Saturday night following Havdallah. This gives seniors a chance to say goodbye to NFTY, underclassmen, and each other. Participants can buy yearbooks and a year-end slideshow is also shown.

What's a TYG?

So we've got the big stuff covered- our region and all over the U.S. and Canada. But there's still a major component in the NFTY community- your temple youth group!

The TYG is the local branch of NFTY. There is usually one at each temple, although some may be stronger or more active than others. It is run by the elected board (usually includes President, Programming VP, Social Action VP, Membership VP, Religious and Cultural VP, Secretary, Treasurer, and some times Grade and NFTY Reps) and the advisor. TYGs can plan monthly events and go to really cool places- into the city for a Broadway show, apple picking, or just hanging out at your temple for a "lounge night." TYGs are sometimes also involved in volunteering at events sponsored by their congregations, such as Brotherhood and Sisterhood events.

Take advantage of your TYG- it's a great opportunity to meet cool kids that live around you and to connect more locally to leadership opportunities!

Being a new member in NFTY can be like being in a foreign country...
So here are some basic terms to help you feel a part of our amazing region!

NFTY Dictionary

- ✧ **Advisor**- Wonderful adults who advise and mentor our youth in programming, logistics, administrative work and leadership skills.
- ✧ **Birkat Hamazon**- This is the prayer that Jews say after we eat. The prayer is to thank God for our food and drink.
- ✧ **Biennial**- The URJ biennial occurs every other year, when there is not a NFTY convention. This is a massive gathering of all the adult leaders of the reformed Jewish movement. Biennial will occur this December in San Diego, California. NFTYites have the opportunity to be a part of the NFTY youth track if they attend.
- ✧ **B'rit Kehilah**- NFTY's Code of conduct. You sign this before coming to every event; it details the rules and regulations of a NFTY event. Basically, you promise not to do drugs, drink, engage in inappropriate sexual conduct and to be a respectful NFTYite.
- ✧ **Camp Swift**- A summer camp for kids from the phoenix area. NFTYi Southwestites have the opportunity during the summer to volunteer as counselors for kids that might not otherwise be able to have a summer-camp experience. Although we support Camp Swift, it is not a part of NFTY.
- ✧ **Convention**: NFTY Convention is a North America wide event that occurs every other year. NFTYites from across North America (including Canada), and even across the world gather to learn, pray, and have fun. The most recent convention occurred in February 2007 in Philadelphia, PA. The next convention will be in 2009, and the location is TBA
- ✧ **EIE- Eisendrath International Exchange High School in Israel** or EIE is a program for exceptional high school sophomores, juniors and seniors to spend an unforgettable semester immersed in the culture and history of Israel. It is an exceptional living and learning experience, responding to the needs and expectations of participants, parents and home high schools.
- ✧ **Regional Board**- This is the wonderful group of people who devote enormous amounts of time and energy to make your TYG and your region succeed. Executive Boards always consist of a President, a Programming Vice-President (PVP), a Social Action Vice-President (SAVP), and a Religious and Cultural Vice-President (RCVP), Communications Vice-President or Secretary (CVP), a Membership Vice-President (MVP). Some boards also have other positions like a Financial Officer or Treasurer, Ruach Chair, etc.
- ✧ **Installations**- A very special ceremony when the old executive board says good-bye and the new executive board is put in charge.
- ✧ **JYG**- JYG stands for Junior Youth Group. They are the 6th through 8th graders of your temple. NFTYites are in JYG's before they are in NFTY. It's a NFTYites job to get the JYGs involved and excited to be in NFTY when they are old enough.

- ✧ **Kallah/Institute**- Fun weekends during which NFTYites from all different TYG's in a particular region come together to meet other NFTYites, pray together and learn some stuff each region has about 4 per year.
- ✧ **Kutz Campus**- Kutz Campus is the North American NFTY Leadership Academy, located in Warwick, NY. NFTYites go to KUTZ for one, two, or three "academies" during the summer to learn about leadership and Judaism.
- ✧ **Mechina**- This is a leadership training week for newly-elected NFTY regional officers that takes place at Kutz Camp. There is also a North American NFTY Board meeting which provides an opportunity to pass important resolutions and set the NFTY agenda for the upcoming year.
- ✧ **Mitzvah Corps** – The NFTY Mitzvah Corps programs allow Reform Jewish teens to experience social action at its best. Mitzvah Corps combines direct hands-on involvement in communities that need energy, dedication and love that youth can provide with an educational curriculum focused on Jewish social and ethical issues.
- ✧ **NFTY**- NFTY is the North American Federation of Temple Youth. Anyone who is a member of a Temple youth group from Hawaii to New York and from Canada to Texas is a part of NFTY.
- ✧ **Programs**- Informal programs (as opposed to formal education in the classroom) take place at all kallot or other regional events. Programs could be about any topic from Purim to AIDS to the Middle East Peace Process. Programs can also be social, like a carnival or a dance.
- ✧ **Region**- This encompasses all the TYG's that fall in a certain geographic area. NFTY has 19 regions (see map). These TYG's then get together for kallot and they elect an Executive Board. Our region consist of Las Vegas; Arizona; New Mexico; and El Paso, Texas
- ✧ **Ruach**- That's spirit, and boy do we have a lot of it! Just take a look at our song sessions, our programs, and our services. We love NFTY and it shows in everything that we do!
- ✧ **Song Sessions**- These are where our ruach really shines through! We sing lots of Jewish songs, while clapping, dancing, stomping, and generally making lots of noise. These are usually led by wonderful people called, of course, song leaders
- ✧ **Tikkun Olam**- Tikkun Olam is repairing the world. It's what we NFTYites must do because we are biblically, ethically, and personally obligated. This involves stuff like mitzvah projects, mitzvah corps, and doing mizvot in general.
- ✧ **TYG**- TYG stands for Temple Youth Group. It's the group of teenagers at your temple that get together for social events, programs, and services. Your TYG is then part of a region. All TYG's are part of NFTY
- ✧ **URJ**- URJ stands for the Union of Reform Judaism. It's the parent body of NFTY. The URJ encompasses all of NFTY plus lots of college students, adults, rabbis, cantors, temple board members, and well any reform Jew in America. They also manage camps like Kutz. They provide adult, rabbinical, and financial support to NFTY

NFTY-SW Traditions

Stuff that makes us unique!

Wooden Ships: At the first event of the year, the seniors have the opportunity to leave behind advice and share memories with the underclassmen. They have a ceremony when they make wooden ships, say a few words, and then let them sail in the water.

Friendship Circle: A few times over the course of every Kallah, everyone gathers in a circle to sing songs. The seniors then kick their shoes in the middle and form a senior circle in the middle. At the end the seniors lead everyone in the NFTY cheer.

Class Cheers: After friendship circle, directly after the NFTY cheer, everyone breaks into their separate classes to show their spirit with their class cheers.

Senior Circle: On the last night of the last event of the year, Spring Kallah, the seniors all gather to share final thoughts and memories with their classmates and friends.

Bead Necklaces: Participants receive a bead at each event that they attend. If they attend enough events, participants will eventually accumulate a multicolored necklace. If your necklace is lost you can purchase another one at the store, but not the beads! So try not to lose them!!!

Senior Suave: The NFTY-SW mascot, which is a coyote and is very CLEAN!!! ;)

The NFTY Cheer!

Stomp, Clap, Stomp, Clap, Stomp, Clap, Stomp, Clap

Seniors: (5, 6, 7, 8) Say what's your name?

Group: Say NFTY!

Seniors: Say what's your name?

Group: Say NFTY!

Seniors: Say what's your name?

Group: Say NFTY!

Seniors: Gonna Live and Die...

Everyone: N-F-T-Y!

NFTY's in the front, hey, hey, hey
Let me hear you grunt, ugh, ugh, ugh
NFTY's in the middle, hey, hey, hey
Let me hear you giggle, hee, hee, hee
NFTY's in the rear, no, no, no
Let me hear you **CHEER!!!!**

Seniors: You got it?

Group: Yea!

Seniors: You got it?

Group: Yea!

Everyone: It's in my knees, my knees are weak

It's in my mouth, I can not speak

It's in my hair, it's over there

It's over there, it's everywhere!!!

Stomp, Clap, Stomp, Clap, Stomp, Clap, Stomp, Clap

Seniors: (5, 6, 7, 8) Say what's your name?

Group: Say NFTY!

Seniors: Say what's your name?

Group: Say NFTY!

Seniors: Say what's your name?

Group: Say NFTY!

Everyone: Gonna Live and Die...

N-F-T-Y!

(Classes break into their own cheers)