

Dear Regional Youth Directors, Presidents, and Rel/Eds,

As we start a new year in the Jewish calendar, it is time to reflect on our personal lives and consider changes we need to make for the upcoming year. Likewise, we need to reflect on the past years in USY and make changes that we feel are necessary to secure a strong and vibrant future for our organization.

In order to assure a bright future for USY, we need to increase our membership. USY membership is much lower than it should be and we need to find ways to reverse this statistic. There are many reasons why Jewish teens say they don't want to join USY, and perhaps the most frequent excuse deals with the Jewish aspects of our organization and that we are "too Jewish." This is not the image of USY we want potential members to have. We want Jewish teens to find Judaism appealing, engaging, and interesting. We need to market the "Rel/Ed" component of USY a little better and make USY Judaism more attractive while keeping true to our mission and identity as the youth arm of the Conservative Movement.

I am proud to introduce Project ReJEWvenate, an initiative focused on creating a new, appealing, fun, and inspiring approach to Judaism in USY and marketing it in a modern and chic fashion in order to pull in potential members that would otherwise not join our organization. Membership in USY is not only a mem/kad issue; it is a situation which each position should strive to improve. Project ReJEWvenate is the Rel/Ed response to the decline in membership.

Throughout the upcoming months, you will be receiving numerous resources and ideas linked through Project ReJEWvenate. The first one is the attached flyer, introducing Project ReJEWvenate and asking for ideas and input. We are asking you and your USYers to send us ideas that you and they feel would improve the image of USY Judaism and make it more appealing. We are also asking you to send us ideas on how we could market USY Judaism better and spice up the "rel/ed" aspects of our organization. I would appreciate it if you would join our Project ReJEWvenate team and help us with this difficult but attainable task. Please send any ideas, thoughts, comments, or questions to me at reled@usy.org.

I look forward to working with you these next few months. Be on the lookout for future Project ReJEWvenate resources so that we can market USY's Jewish image in a new and modern way. Get ready to reJEWvenate USY!

L'shana Tova,

Daniel Novick
2008 USY Religion/Education Vice President