NFTY prides itself on being a teen-powered youth movement, and it is. However, behind every strong teen is an adult supporting and partnering with them to guide and enhance their work. When we look back over our year together, we, as the NFTY-PAR President (Abby Adelman) and NFTY-PAR Senior Regional Director (Amanda Wachstein) concur that our substantive youth-adult partnership has led to stronger programming, leadership, and friendships.

Throughout this past year, we encountered a variety of challenges and successes, all of which we tackled together. Last May, at the 2018-2019 Regional Board’s first weekend event, we faced our first big challenge: a Brit K’hilah (https://nfty.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2018/09/SVP-Brit-Kehilah-Edits1.pdf-1.pdf) (NFTY’s code of conduct) infraction that side-tracked the event’s focus. Through open communication, complete trust and mutual respect, Abby kept the event moving forward while mentoring the new regional leaders; at the same time, Amanda handled the incident with the individuals. We had confidence in each other’s skill set, decision-making abilities and thoughtfulness. The event was able to continue and received especially positive feedback from the participants. After that event, we realized we had a great partnership, and that it would be an incredible asset throughout the rest of the NFTY year. Trust and respect were established.
Together, we dove into more profound conversations with the region through programs about healthy sexual relationships, self-love, and even one about how you portray yourself on social media – all of these programs encouraged the teen leaders and participants to step outside their comfort zone. Working together, we understood that these intense but relevant topics could lead to immature behavior from some of the participants. As the adult, Amanda communicated her concerns while listening to her teen partners advocate for this content. As the teen leader, Abby was able to both recognize Amanda’s concerns, while representing the interests of her peers.

Our year culminated in April with our final event, which was part of NFTY’s Big Month – a time when every region has at least one event. Our event, Spring Kallah at Camp Harlam, was definitely one for the books. The event had ups and downs: rainstorms, health issues, behavioral issues and another Brit K’hilah infraction… all while celebrating our year together, highlighting our graduating seniors and receiving outstanding positive feedback regarding our programming.

Looking back at our year-long relationship, we can see that our partnership, which consisted of clear communication, respect, trust, and total honesty, set an example of what a successful youth-adult partnership can look like for the entire region. We not only enjoyed working together, but also learned the value of true partnership.