

Candidate for the 31st VAC BBG sh'lichah
Rachel Gabriella Jankell

What is your vision for Virginia Counsel?

My vision for this year's Virginia council is that we can all come together if not in person but spiritually. A year of community and prayer. Virginia Counsel will have services that embrace all levels of observance. This will be to include everyone whether they range from being observant to maybe being a little bit more relaxed. No matter how observant or non observant we are, we should be able to come together as a community. I want to make services whether it's a Havdalah service or a Friday night service into a place where everyone feels comfortable. That is what I would work on as VAC's 31st council Sh'lichah community and prayer.

What are three concrete steps you will take to achieve this vision, and why is this the direction in which we should go?

- 1) I would balance Hebrew and English in our prayers so we can come together and pray as a community. I would do this by introducing Hebrew/English prayers for services, we would choose one prayer within the service to do in English because a lot of times as Jewish teens we learn the Hebrew and we don't always know what exactly we are praying for. I've personally recited the Hebrew many times having no idea what it means in English.
- 2) I would also like to work on how we conduct our services. A lot of time we focus on the main events, although interesting and engaging, services are just something we are obligated to do to get to the main event of our program. Services are an important part of Judaism but most of the time are approached as an obligation instead of a privilege or an experience. If we put time and effort into services just like they deserve I'm hopeful that they could become a main event no matter how observant you are. This could mean having themed services every so often like a self love havdalah or a friendship havdalah.
- 3) We could also start by incorporating an opening/closing prayer whether in English or Hebrew into our programs (this would not be a requirement but it would be something to bond us together during tough times.)

BBYO is a community and BBYO is my community. I feel by introducing these three concepts we can grow stronger as a community. BBYO has given me so much and now it's my turn to give back to BBYO.