



May 3, 2024

Dear BBYO,

Today, on your centennial birthday, I want to offer my gratitude.

I came to you later in life, looking for the next step in my career. I was ready for a new opportunity, a new connection, and a deeper understanding of my potential. You did for me what you've done for hundreds of thousands of young Jews over the 100 years—you welcomed me in and encouraged me to be my best self. You gave me an incredible gift—the opportunity to pursue a mission that would ultimately connect me with the most magnificent people as well as my own inner teen self.

Your generosity comes as no surprise. You are known for your inclusivity and your ability to bring out the best in people. Your very essence is the joy and magic of being young. The ups and downs, the optimism, the naivety, the emotion, the glory and the exploration of it all—brought to life through cheers, chants, candles, music, and the love among siblings, arm-in-arm, seeking and finding together. You are Jewish community personified and aflame.

Your approach to reaching and inspiring young Jews has stood the test of time. You don't sway to the latest trends, no matter how tempting that might be. No gimmicks and no panic. You do what you've always done—put young people in control of their own destiny, inviting them to lead their peers and encouraging them to believe in each other. And most importantly, you remind them that they are driven by a deeper purpose, the need to repair our broken world and perpetuate our Jewish faith. In your presence I heard the Talmudic phrase, *"every blade of grass has an angel that bends over it and whispers, 'grow! grow.'"* You are that angel.

You've guided the travels of young Jews across the globe, where they've turned ballrooms into sanctuaries, and brought prayer to places that turned a deaf ear to Jewish voices long ago. From Kansas City to Kiev, to summer nights in the Poconos and sunrises on Masada. The Schwartz's basement too, it doesn't really matter. The BBYO uniform (a t-shirt, not necessarily your own or clean) appears and reappears in these places. Thus, they become *our* places, homes to *our* forever memories.

As we head into the next century, let's walk unafraid, arm-in-arm, just as we have for the past 100 years. No matter where we are in the world, let the power of togetherness be our guide. And if we are ever lost, we will no doubt find each other in your places of adolescent joy, where the music of young Jews finds its way directly to G-d.

With undying love and gratitude during your centennial year and always,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Matthew Grossman'.

Matthew Grossman
Chief Executive Officer