

**MYD Officer Application
2012**

**To be voted on Tuesday, January 17, 2012 at the MYD General Meeting
Applications will be available on gomyd.com for the membership to view on Jan 9
Applicants must be a 2012 dues paying member**

Please submit to Emmy at president@gomyd.com by 6PM on January 9, 2012

Name: Dan Beksha
Position Running For: Vice President
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Occupation: Finance

MYD events attended in 2011:

- General Meetings and Executive Board Meetings
- Some of the other major events (not exhaustive in the spirit of brevity):
- State of the Union Watch Party
- Engendering Progress
- Food for Thought
- Annual Summer BBQ
- Young Gets It Done
- Holiday Party

Please answer the following questions. Brevity will win you points with voters.

1) What is your vision for the Manhattan Young Democrats for 2012? Give some concrete examples of initiatives you would like to undertake before the end of the year.

2012 has the opportunity to be an amazing year for MYD. Our growth in membership and impact at both the local and state level over the past three years have left us well positioned to be at the forefront of the action as we head into the election season. The crux of my vision for MYD is to continue to develop and leverage the energy and excitement that has been key to the group's success. To that end, there are three key organizational themes we need to focus on:

- ***Reinvigorate the E-board*** – MYD had great top line member growth in 2011, surging from 120 to over 300 dues-paying members, but we need to make sure to maintain the enthusiasm of the core leadership. This year we took a step back in

motivating the core team/board and engaging those individuals in the organization. A key focus for me is to empower those chosen for the 2012 Eboard to use their skills and talents and maximize the potential impact of their positions. Put simply, decisions should not just come down from above – engaging the board helps to limit burnout of the officers, as well as ensure MYD is at its strongest and most effective with a huge core of people actively pushing it forward.

- ***Mission 500*** – As last year’s Development Director, I oversaw “Project 250,” with the goal of having 250 dues-paying members by the end of 2011. As a result, 2011 was the best year for member growth ever (up 150% over 2010) and the goal is to continue the trend. 500 members is a realistic target as we continue to expand the footprint of MYD. However, that number alone is not an end goal -- we need to continue to focus on engaging the new members and bringing them into the fold of our 2012 election efforts. Having a more engaged/motivated board has the ripple effect of strengthening the membership – much like the strategy I implemented this year to encourage member recruitment.
- ***Strengthen the Committees*** – Many of the proposed constitutional changes pertain to the committees, with the possibility of severely reducing their role in the organization. As a former Committee Chair, I’ve seen first hand the positive impact the committees can have and how they are a key element to our issue advocacy, member recruitment and leadership development. At the same time, I understand the challenges of running a committee and the difficulties of continuing to engage members around a singular issue. Instead of undercutting the committees, we need to replicate the most successful models (the Women’s committee in 2011 is a prime example) and give support to bolster those that need it. In short, issue committees are one of MYD’s greatest assets and we need to provide them with the institutional support to thrive.

2) Why do you think you’re a good fit? Please list relevant experiences you would draw from and strengths you could bring to the position you are running for.

I think that my history in the organization - Development Director in 2011 and CASE Committee Chair in 2010 - give me a unique insight into the inner workings of the organization, as well as the interests and priorities of the membership. The biggest issue in 2012 is upping the engagement of the membership as we fight for a positive (read Democratic) result to the elections in the fall. I think that my time as Development Director taught me a lot about engaging with the dynamic collection of individuals that are attracted to MYD and gives me a solid foundation of connectivity with the membership to build from. In addition, my goal being on the board is to be inclusive and inspirational - MYD is a volunteer organization and the goal is that our work is both productive and enjoyable. Having been in the leadership of numerous organizations from High School through post-college life, I’ve found that every organization works best when there is someone at the top who is focused on morale and that is a role I enjoy playing.

3) Serving on the executive board of MYD is a significant time commitment. How committed will you be as a member -- how would you be able to fit your leadership responsibilities within your current schedule? Please list your commitments outside of your employment (i.e. leadership positions in other clubs).

For me, MYD is my biggest commitment outside of my job and the election in 2012 is my biggest focus for the year. Being a part of MYD helps me align my time with my biggest passion – building a stronger young progressive movement as a force for change. The only other organization I play an active role in is The Bowery Mission where I serve on the junior board and help with fundraising and service events. This serves as a good complement to MYD as it has been a frequent community service venue of the organization over the past few years.

4) What 3 (three) issues would you consider most important to New York?

2012 is a unique year in that most important issue for the State is a national issue – reelecting President Obama. Beyond that, continuing to fight to clean up Albany (we have made some progress but there is much more to be done) and continually reminding Gov Cuomo that he is a *progressive first* and pragmatist second are critical issues in NY this year.

5) In 2012, the Democratic Party will be focused on winning important state and national elections. How do you think MYD should be involved?

As I've said above, MYD has the opportunity to be the young progressive standard in 2012. Being situated in Manhattan, we have the unique opportunity to capitalize on the democratic energy (and especially *young* democratic energy) that is around us. My goal for MYD this year is to make it the young progressive clearing house for democratic action in the 2012 campaigns. MYD has a large footprint but we need to continue to work to build that out – both through adding members and building ties to campaigns. Three key ways we can be involved: direct field activity via bussing our members to the battlegrounds, phone banking and staffing events in the city.

6) What do you see as the biggest challenge to engaging young voters? In broad terms, how can we make changes to correct it?

I think one of the biggest reasons for lack of participation for young people in NYC is simply a time/coordination issue. Our goal should be to provide the coordination and leadership needed to connect individuals to the field, whether that means organizing our own phone banks/field sessions or being the encyclopedia for all campaign info in the greater NY area.

7) (Optional) Is there anything else you think MYD's membership and leadership should know about you before reviewing your application?

One of the things that we always need to remember is that this is a volunteer, membership organization and the countless hours dedicated to MYD are just that – voluntary. Being an officer of MYD is a great privilege but it comes with a responsibility to each and every member. It's easy to get caught up in internal politics and issue of the moment but we have to make sure to remember the bigger picture that we're all on the same team. As a collection of individuals, MYD has an amazing array of talents, ideas and energy. The goal of every officer is to maximize the potential of the membership because as a collective entity *we have no ceiling*.