**GA Write-Up**

I had the opportunity and honor of attending the Jewish Federation of North America's General Assembly in November in Washington, D.C. The theme of the three-day event was "Think Forward."

This was my second General Assembly, and I again was struck by the power of convening thousands of Jews with diverse backgrounds and perspectives, but who also share a single-minded, philanthropic vision of sustaining Jewry around the world. My favorite speaker was David Gregory, former Meet the Press moderator. Gregory shared the heartbreaking story of his troubled relationship with his father, who had just passed away the week before. The timing of his passing you could tell was emotionally draining on Gregory, as it was also the week of his eldest son's bar mitzvah. This moment of the program really underscored the importance of my involvement in federation -- making "L'dor va'dor" possible in our state.

Even though all of the plenary sessions and breakouts were powerful, one of my favorite parts of participating in Federation events at the national level are the relationships I get to continue to build with friends from around the world. I am in the six-year National Young Leadership Cabinet program, and the short time I got to spend with my chevre was alone worth the price of the trip. Not only was it fun to see friends I only get to see in person a few times a year, but it was nourishing for my soul and reset my passion.

Overall, it was an energizing, impactful three days, and I encourage more Arkansas Jews to make the trip next year. You'll bring back a more holistic sense of our mission and the part we can play in our state.

Michelle Malashock