

Standing With Israel

Day school students, parents gather to support Israelis in violent times.

Gabriella Burman | Special to the Jewish News

More than 300 parents and students from Hillel Day School and Frankel Jewish Academy attended an Oct. 21 StandWithIsrael program, showing solidarity with Israel as citizens there face daily terrorist attacks from Palestinians incited to violence over false claims that the status quo allowing Muslims to pray on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem is changing.

The evening incorporated song, study and prayers for the State of Israel, and was led by faculty from both schools. The program was convened to combat the sense of helplessness many American Jews feel when Israel is under attack.

"At times like these, we pray and thus earn God's protection by remembering who we are. And while we are blessed to live at a time when Israel is strong, we come together tonight to ask God for one more blessing," said Rabbi Jonathan Berger, Hillel Day School's rabbi, as he introduced the Prayer for the State of Israel, which asks God to

direct its leaders with wisdom and to grant "everlasting joy to its inhabitants."

Steve Freedman, Hillel head of school, ended the evening with a call to action, urging participants to take back the narrative on social media, which has been co-opted by sensationalism and media bias against Israel, and to press representatives in Washington, D.C., to sign the Royce-Engel letter urging Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to "turn down the heat," Freedman said.

"It might seem like with all the violence we are living in the worst possible world," Freedman said. "But we are Jews. We believe that even when things are terrible, we can still make the world a better place. We have a theology of hope, as embodied by Hatikvah," he said, and the crowd stood to sing it together. ✱

Gabriella Burman is communications coordinator at Hillel Day School.



Rabbi Boruch Lazewnik leads day school students in song.



Dianne Mouradian, Karen Diskin and Ilana Diskin listen intently to speakers.

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