

Laura Rose Kreditor '09

My experience on The March of the Living still resonates in my life today, and that is what I want to share with you all tonight.

The March of the Living is not a normal type of experience. It is an experience for the body and the soul and for friendships and personal growth. It is a beautiful executed dichotomy of mourning in Poland and celebrating in Israel. Both coming from an actively Jewish household and growing up within the Dallas Jewish Community, I was exposed to the horrors of the Holocaust at a very young age. Before I knew the number 1,000 I had heard of 6 million. By the time I went on the March, at 18, I had attended numerous Kristallnacht ceremonies, Holocaust museums, and had been familiarized with Holocaust cinema.

But now, having not only seen with my own eyes, but having experienced with me community, the horrors that live in Poland and the miracles that breathe in Israel, there is emotion behind my knowledge and Holocaust education. I am able to convey this piece of our history beyond my textbooks.

And to go beyond education, it provided a connection to not only the thousands of people that I walked with silently from Auschwitz to Birkenau and then joyously from Ben Yehuda to the Kotel, but to all of Beni Yisrael.

To march through the scattered graves within the camps, hand in hand with the living Dallas Jewish Community both comforts me and empowers me today. The March exposed the need to be an active member of the Jewish people, especially when we continue to live in a world where 'never again' still needs solicitation.

Whether you had family in the Holocaust or not, part of your heritage lived, fought, and many died within the walls of the camps. I find it to be a great gift to have been able to pay my respects to those that perished and to walk beside many of those that survived. It is my deepest hope that all who wants to go on this life-changing program will get the opportunity— it is a trip for everyone.

Tomorrow we celebrate Purim and read Megilat Esther, a story in which the slaughtering of the Jewish people was prevented by standing up against evil and taking an active role in Jewish survival. The March of the Living is one of the many ways that we can continue to stand up to the faces of evil, by demonstrating the koach, strength, and survival of the Jewish people that still live today.