

March for Our Lives Trip

Our LT Teens started their journey late Friday morning in good spirits. I could tell that they were excited and felt called to action by the cause, but also didn't know what to expect. We arrived at Washington Hebrew Congregation and joined 400 other teens for Shabbat dinner and Shabbat services. The service was led by the WHC Clergy and well known Jewish musicians Dan Nichols, Stacey Beyer, Rabbi Joe Black and Alan Goodis. Throughout the service teen leaders from Parkland spoke about "Why I March" and memorialized their classmates. A teen leader from each congregation got to do a reading in the service and Noah Katz from LT represented us well and read a reading by President Barack Obama.

250+ teens and chaperones had a great evening together singing and sign-making for the rally the next day. We slept over at the Temple (some actually slept well!) and we joined 2000+ Reform Jews the next morning for a pre-Rally Shabbat morning service. Except for hearing from Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz (from Broward County, FL) and Rabbi Bradd Boxman, the Reform Rabbi from Parkland, FL, the service was entirely led by teens. In addition to praying, singing and learning words of Torah together, we heard from NFTYites from Parkland who survived the mass shooting and lost friends. It was incredibly moving and emotional.

With our signs, headbands, and buttons, we then – as Rabbi Joshua Heschel once said – “prayed with our feet.” We headed out to Pennsylvania Avenue and joined 800,000 people of all ages for the march and rally. As many you have read and seen, the only adults at the rally were performers; every single speaker was a young person and hearing them and being with others was extraordinary. Everyone around us was respectful and peaceful and there for one reason; to help bring about change for a safer world.

At the end of the rally, our kids felt both exhausted and exhilarated. They felt counted, heard, moved, hopeful and there was a sense of this only being the beginning of something more. They feel part of a Movement and it was punctuated for them through a Jewish lens. Going to the rally was important and transformative for them, but doing so on Shabbat with other Reform Jewish youth made them feel a greater sense of belonging and mission.

Below are some pictures and a video from our time together.

With hopes for peace throughout the world, I wish you a wonderful Passover holiday!

L'Shalom,

Rabbi Eve Rudin

Director of Education, Youth and Families