

MOL Long-Term Follow Up Study (2000-2008)

Selected Comments



Motivation for Participating in the March of the Living

1. I found much meaning in making a trip to the graveyard of my grandfather's many relatives – a trip that he himself would be unable to make. I marched on his behalf.
2. I wanted to see the places where these hate crimes occurred so I could say I was there and I've seen what was done to these victims.
3. My main reason for going was to act as a witness, listen to testimonies, and see certain sites with my own eyes.
4. The ability to discover and / or experience my history outside of the classroom was an important part of the reason I decided to go on the trip.
5. I thought it was an important trip for me to go on as a Jewish teen... one day soon there will be no survivors around and someone needs to be able to tell their stories.
6. More so than learning about the holocaust or Israel or my Jewish identity, it was important for me to see first hand the history of such significant events. I needed to see it, not to believe it, but to strengthen what I had learned about in Hebrew school, and to never allow the story of those events be denied. I saw it with my own two eyes, what happened was a terrible reality, that I am aware of, and no one can ever make me think otherwise. What I saw cannot be proven wrong.
7. I always had an interest in studying the Holocaust, and going to Poland to see where it took place was something I felt I had to do. A movie, book, picture or story can paint a picture, but stepping on the grounds of the concentration camps, seeing the Warsaw Ghetto, and hearing the stories from the survivors where it all occurred, was more than any movie, book or picture could ever explain. I knew this would be the case, and I knew it was something I had to experience first hand.
8. I needed to bear witness, an important factor for me, knowing that, soon, we will be the only witnesses.
9. Three out of my four grandparents are holocaust survivors. They are each a strong part of my life, although they have been deeply affected by the trauma they underwent – they do not speak of their pasts and the torturing that they endured. I feel that in order to properly honour and respect them, it is vitally to continually learn more of their past, and it will help me relate to them more closely in the present.
10. I went on March of the living primarily to bear witness to the sites at which a majority of my ancestry perished. I felt it was my responsibility as a maturing member of the human race to be able to say, "I was there, I saw, and was told by someone who was held prisoner here, what happened."

11. I wanted to go, not to learn more about the holocaust, but to walk those steps so that those who died will never be forgotten. I wanted to gain more of an understanding about how and why the holocaust occurred, and to have it become more of a reality that a textbook or a lesson taught frequently in class. I wanted to understand what it meant. I wanted to honour the ones who died and the ones who survived. I wanted to hear about the holocaust from those who lived it and be with them as they retraced those horrible steps. None of my friends ended up going with me, but ultimately I chose to go anyway because I felt it was important to try to understand not just to learn more facts, and that it was important to remember.
12. [I wanted] to honour my grandfather whose family perished in the Holocaust.
13. [I went on the March of the Living] to visually see what my piano teacher went through. She always told me stories of the holocaust.
14. Both my grandparents were in the Holocaust and I always believed that it was my responsibility to learn as much about it as possible, to preserve their memory and everything they went through.

Alumni Pre-March Self-Descriptions

1. This trip allowed me to actually face the past, and see what we had to go through. No teaching can do what this trip has. It allows me to try and teach others and encourage them to go on the trip. Also, I understand more about the past.
2. When I first decided to go on the March of the Living, I knew it would be an experience of a lifetime. I never could have imagined how I would feel emotionally, but once I got there, the feelings were so different from any emotion I ever experienced. Before going on the March of the Living, I wasn't as involved in my religion as much as I am now, after going on the trip. As well obviously I was always interested in wanting to know more but after going on the March I am searching to know more.
3. After being on this trip, it almost feels as there was no 'before'. I was so profoundly changed in my passion to educate others about human rights, and to carry on the legacy of the millions of Jews, and others, murdered in WWII, that it's hard to remember what I was like before. I went to university for radio and television studies, to tell the world of injustice and genocide. My goals have altered since then, to educate the world about media bias against Israel, and anti-Zionism as a new form of anti-Semitism... I do hold tight to Jewish cultural traditions.
4. Prior to The March of the Living I did not speak up as much when discussing the Holocaust. Now that I have been there and seen the horrible happenings of WWII and the Nazis I feel it is my duty to share that with those who have not gone or who are unable to go.

Impact of the Experience in Poland

1. Whenever someone today tells me the Holocaust doesn't exist, I explain how I saw the nail scratches in the gas chambers or the pile of ashes.
2. Visiting the concentration camps had the most impact on me because my Zaida survived the Holocaust and I know that he was in those exact places years before. That made me realize even more how hard it was for him.
3. After we exited the gas chambers at Majdanek, we all got together as a group and we just held each other as a group. we prayed and lit candles, and it is something that I will never forget.
4. I remember going to the concentration camps and seeing the scratches on the walls of the gas chambers. I vividly remember the march itself. As well on our way to a site, we saw this one random grave site. It was an unknown site that was not part of the trip. However a local came and told us what had happened, and Jews had been killed in the forest, and this was the site. We sang mourning prayers and it was unexpected that in the middle of the road, on the way to a concentration camp, we would discover another atrocity.
5. The rows of ovens at Majdanek and the huge dome of ashes are so appalling...all deniers should be forced to walk thru this camp.
6. Walking thought Majdanek, it finally hit me what I was now a witness to and I really started to wonder what had happened to my missing family.
7. The concentration camps really hit home. I had been learning about them all my life and it really impacted me when I was standing where everything I had studied happened. I will never forget when our survivor, David, told his story in Auschwitz.
8. I will always remember sitting on the steps of the barracks in Auschwitz listening to the survivor on my trip tell his story with tears in his eyes and emotion in his cracking voice as he pointed to specific spots where certain events in his past had occurred. That memory has stayed with me since the moment it occurred and will follow me for the rest of my life.
9. My trip had the opportunity to visit a Jewish school in Warsaw which was amazing. I enjoyed seeing that Jewish life was beginning to flourish in Poland again.
10. The most lasting impression I had in Poland was the reaction of those around me during our visit to Auschwitz. The tears and pain in their eyes stay with me to this day and will for many more years.



11. I will never forget what I saw and heard in Poland and it has impacted me the last three years. The most powerful moment for me was being at Auschwitz with my survivor (Sally) whose grandson surprised her that morning in Warsaw to be there with her when she saw the camp for the first time. It solidified to me the important of family, of faith and of combating current and future genocides.
12. The most lasting impact for me I think, was standing in the monument that now stands where the trains would stop at the ghetto to take people away. I knew that that was the last spot of “freedom” some people ever had. Also, walking down streets, through the camps, everywhere really, someone could have died there. The camps were incredibly emotional, but I know that I would jump at the opportunity of experiencing that again. It is so important to remember everything, and I know that I personally can still remember almost everything about the camps.
13. We were at the Yeshiva in Lublin shortly after visiting Majdanek and the entire group was feeling down after the visit. It was Friday, Shabbat was approaching and we started dancing and singing in the Yeshiva and it was very uplifting and hopeful. It felt like the phrase “Jewish people live” was coming true in front of our eyes.
14. We visited an old graveyard on our first day. The name escapes me at the moment, however I remember the rows upon rows of headstones and the knowledge that it was so packed, that people were buried on top of one another. Then knowing such a large Jewish community was once there is now gone was incredibly sad.
15. The experience that had the most impact on me was going to the Sobibor concentration camp. We stood in front of the ashes of thousands of Jews and held a small ceremony in memory of the victims.
16. There is so much explanation I want to give as answers for my questions, but I’ll just put down a few. Having Rabbi Black on the trip was the most influential. He instilled meaning into everything, and turned the trip from a depressing remembrance of the past, to an inspiring and meaningful present and future. He gave the trip the most valuable component, the G-d factor. I know many people from over the years and from my own trip who feel the exact same way. David Solomon was also amazing, and the poem about shoes that he read us in Majdanek had a tremendous impact on me. I’m still in touch with him. All the singing that was done in Poland..basically all the inspiration and messages of rebirth and commitment to the unbelievable Jewish people, our Torah, and our Loving Father in Heaven were the best aspects of Poland. And Shabbos in Poland was incredible.
17. The concentration camps and the ghettos had the most lasting effect on me then and it still does today. I still think back to the camps and how I felt and what I felt when I was there. It will stay with me forever. It changed the way I truly look at anti-Semitism and the ignorance people have to all races and ethnicities. Having a survivor on the trip also had a huge impact on the way I experienced the camps and the entire trip. It makes it a whole lot more personal.

18. After visiting a concentration camp the “tough guy” on our bus was the first to break down which shocked us all and put most of us into tears.
19. I think a ton of people, when the thought crosses their mind to go on this trip, they often quickly throw it because they think it will be too hard to handle and simply too depressing but this isn't the case. The trip is, of course depressing at times, as it should be, but the many fun times I had with the people on the trip made the depressing moments more bearable and more important. The moment that had the most lasting impression on me was both sad and happy like many moments on the trip. After the actual March of the Living in Poland and after the ceremony, one of our survivors, Sally Wasserman, spoke to the group.

She read a letter her mother had sent to her Aunt living in Canada before she passed away, knowing her fate. It was terribly sad but she finished her speech by referencing a line from her mother's letter, that being that the revenge her mother knew we'd have was simply surviving and Sally said that the “sweet, sweet revenge” she was talking about was simply being there with us at Auschwitz over 60 years later, with Jewish children, many of which have come from Holocaust survivors like herself. Her last words were happy and it was then that the real importance of being there on this trip, as depressing as it may be at times, really sank in.

20. [The moment with the most impact in Poland] was in Auschwitz, all delegations congregated and everyone was waving their Israeli flags and singing Ani Maamin.
21. [The most impactful moments from the trip were] were walking through Auschwitz with the survivors and listening to their stories while standing in the barracks where they had lived. Also, the actual March with thousands of Jews from all over the world coming to march through the streets of Poland near Auschwitz as happy, free individuals.
22. The year that I went, I was chosen with a few other participants from Toronto, to lead the march from Auschwitz to Birkenau and carry the March of the Living banner. It was an incredible honour. We had to stop every once and awhile to wait while everyone caught up, and to look back and see everyone in their blue March of the Living jackets walking the path is something I'll never forget.
23. My most vivid experience in Poland is from visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. Many of my family members passed through the camp and it was a very emotional experience.
24. On our tour of Birkenau, Nate, one of the survivors (who has become somewhat synonymous with the March of the Living Program), gave a speech about his experience of the Holocaust from inside one of the barracks at Birkenau. It moved me in ways, that I have since never experienced.

25. The site in Poland that had the greatest lasting effect on me was Majdanek. Being the only camp that is still fairly intact, and walking the path that the Holocaust victims walked through the camp (going through the gas chambers / showers on our way into the camp) made the most lasting impression on me. More than any other place in Poland, I felt (though I know it is impossible to compare) in a small way as if I experienced part of the horrors of the Holocaust first-hand. And then, as we left the camp past the incinerators and walked up to the monument which stored the ashes of hundreds of thousands of humans, I felt to a certain extent the unbearable scale of murder which had been committed.
26. I grew up constantly thinking about the Holocaust and having nightmares about it. I never thought I would be able to make it on the March. The moment I stepped off the bus into Auschwitz I immediately broke down into sobs. I had no control over my emotions. It was really a crazy to experience to completely let go of all my fears and sadness in the place where I had family killed and in the place where I had family survive. Another amazing memory that I will never forget is when I got to see my grandfather's apartment (I was marching for him) in Lodz.
27. After we went to Majdanek, which was in my opinion the hardest and worst of the places I set foot in, none of us could eat or wanted to talk on the way back. The entire bus ride was silent and when we got back to the hotel everyone went to their rooms and didn't talk just sat and let everything we had seen and experienced sink in. After a while the coordinators came and got us to come to dinner. It wasn't just dinner though, it was Shabbat dinner that night, and it was the most amazing one I have ever experienced because after seeing such horror and experiencing such heartbreak and sorrow, there was total hope in that room in the hotel and a completely beautiful expression of what had survived, it was amazing, there was the usual arguing over tunes that a wonderful bond formed from because even though the tunes were different everyone knew the words, the sense of community was astounding and it was a wonderful Shabbat.
28. The Majdanek Camp affected me more than any other camp. I was filled with emotions from beginning to end, and I will never forget the sight of the crematorium and then the enormous pile of ashes at the end of the camp. Also, the March of the Living itself probably had the biggest lasting impact on me than any other experience. It was so powerful to walk in a crowd of thousands of Jewish people, and to feel in some way that we were not defeated. I believe that I have never been more in touch of and proud of my Jewish identity than I was on that day.



29. While Majdanek was the most emotionally jarring experience, and one which is seared into my memory, the actual March remains perhaps the most powerful experience of my life.
30. [The greatest impact of the trip was] visiting the concentration camps, listening to the survivors stories and discussing the events with our groups afterwards. touring the cities in Poland was also important because we were met with a bit of anti-Semitism which is not a good thing, but it was an important learning experience for me. it showed me that the purpose of me being on this trip is more needed than I ever could've expected because that anti-Semitism continues to this day and this is something I need to conquer. on the other note one of the best things was meeting polish kids our own age. and realizing their struggles and how they have grown past their own dark history.
31. Our trip went to the synagogue in Tikochin and had an amazing celebration of life, Israel and the Jewish people. We danced, partook in multiple horrahs and enjoyed celebrating being Jewish. After the celebration we boarded our bus and drove through the stunning countryside with a sunset filled purple, pink and orange sky. We arrived at a stunning forest (Ten years later I have only seen trees like that one other time in my life)... I noticed others leaving in tears. I had no idea why, but I figured they were emotional. Until this point nothing had hit me hard, including the gas chambers at Auschwitz and the barracks at Birkenau. The March was unbelievable, but I still had not shed a tear.

Our contingency gathered around a fenced off area, I will never forget the lit yahrzeit candles, the green metal fence, and the faces of the students bundled up in their blue jackets. All was silent. Without warning one of our survivors began to speak. The story she told next has stuck with me, and impacted me, more than any other story I have ever heard. As she began to tell the story of the people of Tikochin, I suddenly felt the first tear roll down my face – the tear I had thought until now was possibly not going to come. To be in a spot so beautiful, a spot when I walked in I thought “ how lucky am I to be at a place of such beauty”. I felt like someone had pulled the rug out from under me and I didn't know which way to go. As our survivor told us the story of the people who were brought to this very spot, lined up, and then forced to dig their grave – the grave I was standing in front of. I pictured the people being shot one by one as their family stood knowing they were next. This was my turning point. I had heard the stories of the camps, heard the tales of those who hid with families, and even knew about mass executions. What made it real for me was the beauty. I had always pictured Poland as dark, grey and gloomy. Beauty was never a thought in my mind. Little things started to make me think. At Auschwitz I remembered green trees and a bright sunny day. In Warsaw we had a picnic at a park, again, in the sun. And at Plaszow, the locals riding through on their bikes. I suddenly realized the grey picture I had in my mind was not necessarily true. That there were beautiful sunny days. That this place of horror actually seemed pretty and pleasant when the sun hit it the right way. And that days like this existed when our ancestors were there. This to me, made it all real.

32. I was struck by the incomprehensibility of the sheer number of people murdered in the holocaust at Treblinka, where stones are meant to represent the largest number of people murdered in one day there. The stones are almost human-sized, and I tried to imagine them as people I knew. This would only account for a few of the stones around me, however, and thinking about this I realized how many lives and stories were really annihilated during a mere day's work in Treblinka.
33. Auschwitz had the most lasting impression of what the holocaust did to people. As we were going into the barracks, our survivor said he was going to wait outside as he never wanted to step foot in them again. But after he thought that a student had a questions he immediately without thinking jumped in and started answering questions. Only until he started speaking about his mother sending him away and the last time he saw his mother did he start to choke up and stopped speaking. It was the only time and only topic [where] he couldn't control the emotions.
34. It was the day we went to Birkenau which was where all my maternal side of the family perished. It is a very weird feeling walking around in a place only 60 years later from where hundreds of thousands of people died. I didn't exactly know how I should be feeling when I was there. The most lasting impression from that day though was when we were standing in one of the barracks and one of our survivors told us a story when he looked outside to see truckloads of naked women and children being driven to the gas chambers which was only a couple hundred meters away. He said that he saw his mother on that truck. I have never had so many shivers go down my back in my life. He kept repeating the words "I wish I never looked outside... I wish I never had to see that" – those words are ingrained in my memory forever.
35. Ticochen, a small shetel no longer. Where 2500 Jews were marched into the nearby forest and slaughtered. I still can't think about it without becoming emotional. I still can't get the image of my own family, walking together, knowing, to out fates. That small square of land, such an unjust resting place for so many. And or course, walking into the crematorium, thinking how unfair it was that I could leave. Asking what made me lucky enough to come and go to this place of certain brutal death to my ancestors.
36. Being in Majdanek left a lasting impression on me. I will never forget how I felt seeing the dome with the ashes and the gas chambers and crematoria. Also, being in towns with the synagogues either destroyed or preserved was very moving for me because it allowed me to imagine the vibrant Jewish life that had existed and had since vanished.
37. It was as though the voices of the past were still calling... This was especially true in the death camps. Everything in the history books suddenly came alive – all my nightmares manifest. And the echoing plea in the back of my mind to never forget.

38. [My most lasting impression was] visiting the synagogue in Oswiecim after visiting Auschwitz. There are only 2 Jews left in the community, not enough for a minyan, and we held services there. I felt like we were bearing witness to the atrocities at Auschwitz while at the same time reviving the Jewish spirit in the synagogue that had been brutally murdered during the holocaust. This was one of the first times I cried in Poland, and it was just as much tears of joy for our survival as tears of sadness.

39. The moment in Poland that had the most impact on me was when we were in one of the concentration camps that had head stones with the names of cities on them. I found the city that my Zaidy had come from, and being a very small town, I couldn't help but know that my relatives had been there years before me. I said mourners kaddish and the way the tomb stone stood out to me above all the rest is something I will never forget.



40. When we went to visit Birkenau I was with my holocaust survivor and had found his name written on one of the barracks, I felt very close to him and towards other Jews who had been left behind. Being able to have a survivor help walk with me through the camps also had a profound impact and remains an important memory to me that I share with others frequently.

41. ... The march – I was privileged to lead the march and hold the flag with Howard. I will never forget how inspired I felt as I lead thousands of young Jews, adults, and some Polish students on the march from Auschwitz to Birkenau. We were marching the same path that the holocaust victims marched, but we were marching for life; to honor those that perished, and to recognize the importance of the Jewish people and our obligation to never forget.

42. ... I will never forget standing in the barracks in Birkenau with the survivor who was on the trip with us describing how it was when he was there during the holocaust.

43. Seeing the size of the concentration camps allowed me to have more perspective on the conditions. The survivor on the trip was pointing out how she hid in the toilets, which were just small cement holes to escape Mengele at Birkenau and it gave me such a strong visual on the situation and a sense of the fear and horror she went through.

44. There was one site in Poland where a ceremony was held in the middle of a field of rocks with various names on them. This site had a lasting impact on me, because a teacher of mine in high school had told us the story of how he had found one of his family members' names there, and this made the site much more relevant to me, on a personal level.

45. The moment that had the deepest impact on me was the speech given by Rabbi Steinmetz at the Umshlagplatz moments before leaving for Israel. It was to this day, the most moving experience of my life.
46. The [most impactful moments on the March were] the visits to the concentration camps Majdanek and Belzec, and hearing the Polish survivors speak of their childhood on the streets where we were walking, and of their suffering in the camps we visited.
47. Going to the concentration camps where so much of my grandparents family had been killed [had the most impact on me.]
48. No words can accurately describe the state I was in during the visit of the concentration camps.
49. [My most lasting impression] was seeing a Holocaust survivor dance and celebrate with his grandson in one of the barracks in Auschwitz after telling his story.
50. Belzec had the most lasting impression on me in Poland. It was reduced to nothing but rubble and the names on the wall were common names because the specifics were unknown. It was hard and it left the biggest impression on me. Another big impact was hearing the survivor talk in the concentration camp Auschwitz or Birkenau (I don't remember which) but it was so hard and painful for her that it left it's own mark on me.
51. The two [experiences in Poland] that had the most lasting impression on me was the walking tour of the ghetto followed by havdallah. I'll never forget the feeling of being close to all those in my group and us feeling the same emotion at the same time. The other lasting impression was at Majdanek, where I explored by myself and did a lot of reflection.
52. Listening to one of the survivors on our trip, Nate Leipziger, tell us his story while standing in Auschwitz-Birkenau [had the most lasting impact on me].
53. I will never forget the things I witnessed. I can't even imagine what it must have been like for those who suffered through the actual holocaust. I'm so thankful that I was just a visitor.
54. [I remember] going to the concentration camps and seeing the marks left behind by the Jews that were tortured and murdered there. Understanding that many of my family members perished this way or survived through these horrible conditions.
55. [I remember visiting] Auschwitz and hearing personal stories from Survivors.
56. When I came back from the March, I had an overwhelming sense of the horrors that humanity is capable of. Before I left, I would have said that all people are inherently good and after I came back, I was not sure sure. I think everyone should visit historical sites of the holocaust, such as concentration camps... one's perception of the horror of the events completely changes. I am more motivated to combat incidences of genocide and racism that occur today.

57. [My most lasting impression] being able to share my grandmother's holocaust survival story at Belzec, along with seeing the ruins of Majdanek will stay with me forever. The outrage and emotion I felt in Poland will never be forgotten.

58. There was a ceremony in Majdanek that probably had the most lasting impression on me. I just remember seeing the survivors standing and speaking, behind the mass grave dome.

Being able to see them stand there, strong, and alive, was probably the most vivid image I had during the trip of what had occurred, and how important it is to avoid it in the future.



59. It really is difficult to choose one [experience] – but perhaps [the most last impression] was a small ceremony that 2 buses took part in at the Belzec concentration camp. The grandchildren of holocaust survivors were asked to stand in a circle and it was a very emotional moment. A close second, would be the day of the actual March at Auschwitz – in a strange and unexpected way I felt a very strong sense of pride in standing in this awful place among young proud Jews from around the world on a sunny day at the very place where they tried to destroy us.

60. Majdanek was definitely the hardest part of Poland for me. We sang Hatikvah in the camp and I thought it was absolutely incredible. I also really appreciated how knowledgeable our tour guide was, and I found that our chaperones, Roberta and Morris, really helped me through every feeling I was having. They were encouraging and non-judgmental and I could really tell that they were there for us.

61. Walking in Auschwitz with our survivor as she recounted her stories from the holocaust [had the most lasting impression on me]. In particular, in the Auschwitz museum when our Madrich asked our survivor to describe a picture that was on a wall and she said that these people were waiting to be gassed and that one of the women in the picture was her mother.

62. After leaving Auschwitz on the day of the actual March of the Living, right before getting on the busses to leave, the entire trip of people and our survivors stood in a circle singing and rejoicing over the idea of Never Again. This moment has stood out in my mind as the most incredible moment. Being able to see our survivors who had families that perished in the very grounds we were standing on, yet instead of crying, were singing and saying never again really impacted my life and made me realize anything can be accomplished.

63. Auschwitz – walking from Auschwitz I to Auschwitz II (Birkenau) with over 20,000 people and walking through the sign “work sets you free” [had the most lasting impression on me]. I also vividly recall being in the experimental gas chamber and seeing the scratch marks from Nazi victims of genocide.

64. I think one of the most vivid memories was when our trip was in a cabin at Birkenau (I believe it was right after the March). The survivors told us a story and then we started chanting (which we did a lot of in Poland – and it was very powerful) and everyone was crying. It was extremely powerful in realizing that the 5 survivors on our trip were actually living in this type of situation, and that we, the 500 odd kids on the trip, were a product of the survival of these incredible people.
65. When we were all gathered in Birkenau, at the site of the half-destroyed crematorium, during the big ceremony and one of the leaders, whose father had died in Birkenau, started giving a speech. But rather than address us, he called out, “daddy”, and spoke instead as though to him. My father is my best friend, so that really affected me. I still get goose bumps when I remember the chaperone saying that.
66. I think one of the most vivid memories was when our trip was in a cabin at Birkenau (I believe it was right after the March). The survivors told us a story and then we started chanting (which we did a lot of in Poland – and it was very powerful) and everyone was crying. It was extremely powerful in realizing that the 5 survivors on our trip were actually living in this type of situation, and that we, the 500 odd kids on the trip, were a product of the survival of these incredible people.

Impact of the Experience in Israel

1. In Israel, I had such a good time. I enjoyed all the parties especially Israel’s birthday celebration. I cannot wait to go back!
2. For me every second of being in Israel was a dream come true... but if made to pick it would be the time we spent not just touring but being with Israelis.
3. Visiting Yad Vashem had the most impact on me. The room with the kids pictures and the voices really touched me.
4. At the end of our stay on the kibbutz in Israel, our bus sat in a big circle and we spoke about our Israel experience... we were so happy and we had become so close through our experience.
5. The entire Yom Ha’atzmaut experience from the night before to the Mega event the night of, as there was a strong sense of Judaism and a powerful presence of Jewish teens from around the world being proud of Israel.
6. [The most lasting impact was] walking to the Kotel at dawn.
7. All of the celebrations in Israel had a lasting effect on me because they made me realize how far we have come and how much we have to be happy for and what we need to continue to fight for.
8. [The most lasting impact were] Yom Ha’atzmaut and Yom Hazikaron. Ceremonies, and then hanging out with friends. Yom Hazikaron is always moving, and Yom Ha’atzmaut takes all the sadness of the trips and brings hope for the future.

9. The march in Israel and all the friends I made [had the most lasting impact on me...].
10. Climbing Masada and seeing the ruins and realizing how long the Jews have been around and struggling to survive. Masada is a must on this trip to connect the Poland and Israel experiences.
11. The walk/parade from city hall to the Wall was a powerful experience.
12. Landing in Israel after a depressing week in Poland and everyone just couldn't help but feel drawn to the land. Some kissed the ground.
13. Visiting the Kotel at 4 o'clock in the morning to find that there were a lot of people there and watching the city of Jerusalem come to life.
14. The first thing we did after we landed in Israel was go to the Western Wall as a group for the sunrise. It was amazing to be there first; right after we were visiting concentration camps in Poland. It felt like home.
15. Celebrating the 60th anniversary of the State of Israel with fellow Jews from around the world impacted me in a way I did not expect. Being able to celebrate at Latrun with so many people all there for the same reason, all celebrating for the same reason made me realize how much I truly love the State of Israel. While singing Hatikvah at the end of the evening with tens of thousands of people, I thought back one week when I had sung Hatikvah with tears in my eyes witnessing devastation, then standing in the Jewish homeland singing Hatikvah again with joy in my heart at that moment seemed so much more full of impact.
16. The most lasting experience in Israel was when we were at Yad Vashem on Yom Hazikaron. When the alarm went off for the moment of silence, we were standing outside Yad Vashem and saw all of the cars stop. We were on a hill, so we saw it happen all below us and around us.
17. The Yom Hazikaron ceremony in Israel. There is nothing as powerful as celebrating the country through an appreciation of those who lost their lives for it. Further, there is nothing more striking than mourning those lives lost with an entire country that truly feels their loss. It was particularly emotional for me, having lost my uncle to a terrorist suicide bombing just over a year prior to the March.
18. The ceremony to commemorate the end of Yom Hazikaron that continues into Yom Ha'atzmaut. I was a member of the choir, and being able to sing and celebrate with Jews from Israel and all around the world was an unbelievable experience.
19. Getting off the plane onto the tarmac and kissing it [had the most lasting impact on me].



20. Shabbat in Israel was an amazing experience. Rabbi Cashman, our survivors and a small group of participants held a tish after Shabbat dinner, singing and telling stories.
21. Looking back 8-9 years to the March of the Living I would have to say that Rabbi Black (one of my chaperones) was one of the most influential Jewish figures I have had in my life. He showed himself to be a passionate advocate for the Jewish people and was a positive example on the trip for students to see what living a meaningful Jewish life would be like. His words of wisdom were an inspiration to all on the trip and I might not be the observant Jew I am today if he had not been on my trip.
22. The most powerful thing about being in Israel was being there with the survivors. It was really the sweetest revenge on the Nazis that our delegation spanned generations of Jews.
23. Sites like Masada and Hezekiah's Tunnel, learning about the ancient history of the Jews before the Diaspora had the most impact.
24. The most lasting experience for me in Israel was climbing Masada at sunrise. I know lots of people say this, but the combination of sunrise and the history was astounding to me.

Knowing that people created this city on top of a mountain was something I could not fathom. Seeing it, just as seeing everything in Poland, made me believe... I would have to say "The Mega Event" [the international March of the Living celebration on Yom Ha'atzmaut)... had the most impact. Coming from such a small Jewish community, it was amazing to see all the Jewish kids from around the world all in one area. Very special moment for me.

25. Everything about Israel had a lasting effect on me. I loved the beauty of the country and the people. Yes they seem a bit arrogant when you first come in contact with them, but then you learn that they have to live their lives day to day whereas we live for a week from now or months from now, they live the day to the fullest and it's extraordinary. The artwork, the crafts, the music, THE FOOD!!!, the people, the architecture, it's all just something you never forget and there's not just one specific point that affects you more than the other.

However, when we got off the plane after a week in Poland and we had that AMAZING fruit, bread and cheese breakfast... that I'll NEVER forget. The ceremonies for Yom Ha'atzmaut and all the other incredible ceremonies were also very effective on how I looked at Judaism and it's beauty.

26. [The the most lasting impact on me] was arriving in Israel and being in the land of the Jewish people, understanding that we do have a means to prevent another Holocaust.
27. Just being in Israel was enough for me. To go from a place of Jewish suffering to a place of such happiness and pride – to realize just how much the Jewish people have overcome – was extremely inspiring. It left me feeling victorious!

28. Visiting the cemetery for the soldiers [had the most lasting impact on me].
29. Coming together with all the other groups at mini Israel and getting to meet Jews like ourselves from all over the world it [had the most lasting impact on me].
30. As much as I will always remember and cherish the traveling to the historical sites and tours of the cities and museums, what has the most lasting impact on me were the times that often go unplanned. Simply traveling together on the bus, the inside jokes that came about throughout the trip on our bus and the moments I shared with the many friends I had made on the trip. These moments were often as simple as a mini dance parties we had on our bus.

Another, maybe more meaningful moment I will always remember is the siren sounded on Yom Hazikaron as it felt a bit more of a memory for the more recent fighters for Israel, those in the IDF, defending Israel's right to exist now, in the new millennium... .

31. Going right away to see the Kotel was the most important for me. It was the most appropriate place to visit after coming back from Poland. It helped to strengthen my views and beliefs in G-d and Judaism after such an emotional trip in Poland.
32. In Israel, I would say that getting off the plane from Poland would be the most lasting experience for me. The transition from bereavement to joy was immense and it remains indelibly linked to my sentiments for the March of the Living.
33. The most memorable moment in Israel for myself was the walk with the entire March of the Living from the City Hall into the Old City through Sha'ar Tziyon and to the Kotel. It was my first time ever visiting the Kotel, and walking there with thousands of people including the survivors and new friends who I had just experienced the horrors of Poland with, with every step I felt a rebirth and a sense of increasing revelation. I experienced a sense of redemption, as if this was the place of gathering for the entire Jewish people, and I can still remember the entire walk there... .
34. I will always remember running outside from the airport and leading a group of girls to kiss the ground. Even though the ground was wet from the rain, I had no hesitation.
35. The place that had the lasting impression on me in Israel was not just one place but many, the Kibbutz in the north, and King Davids Palace were two big ones, and many of the speakers, who from what I heard helped me find my passion for anthropology. It is still lasting as I am looking into working or pursuing my masters in Israel.
36. Yom Hazikaron/Yom Ha'atzmaut ceremony at Latrun – was one of my most memorable moments of my life when the change occurred from one remembrance day to another day of celebration.

37. I loved the Yom Ha'atzmaut party, where students on MOTL from across the world came together to celebrate. I will also never forget the Yom Hazikaron ceremony that we took part of in Israel... it was very special to be with the families of soldiers and lost ones on that day. The day now holds more meaning for me than it did before.

38. Going to the Western Wall and putting on Tefillin [had the most lasting impact on me].

39. After being in Poland for a week, landing in Israel felt as though I was home. I felt safe and secure during the week spent there and wouldn't have changed anything. The things we saw, mountains we climbed, friends we made and experiences we had was an adventure and learning experience that I felt was very important for me to experience. Israel by far is one of my favourite places in the world and I enjoyed every single thing that we did there.



40. Celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut – an indescribable feeling of unity and victory, pride of being Jewish and of Israel.

41. Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration. Having spent a week in Poland, after listening to the stories, the pain, the struggle, nothing was more rewarding than this. The dancing in the streets, the partying across town, the united feeling that we are Jews, we survived, and we have a place to call our home. After a week listening to stories where people did nothing more than try to destroy that, it just doesn't get any better.

42. The coolest experiences were the joined MOL parties where you were interacting with people from all around the world. All those people were there on the trip for the same cause as you.

I can't remember too many of the details but I think the best night was one where there was a dance party at a club called mini Israel. I just remember how cool it was to be dancing where everyone around you was Jewish yet everyone was speaking different languages.

43. Probably the Holocaust Remembrance ceremony, and the hike up Masada [had the most lasting impact on me].

Honestly, it was quite overwhelming for me, to have less than 24 hours between being in a concentration camp that could be operational in a day's time, to being in the land of life for the Jewish people. I know – It was the plane ride to Israel. Sitting there, so close to such life, and coming from such sorrow, knowing we had prevailed, but not knowing how to cope with such loss. I sat with a boy, who I liked, and talked torah and life. Super cliché, but very meaningful to me.

44. Being at the Kotel in Israel for the first time was definitely the experience that I will remember the most. I was overfilled with emotion and a sense that I could feel G-d's presence when I was there. I also remember touching the wall for the first time and thinking about how the rocks are so smooth because so many people for thousands of years have touched these same rocks.
45. The ceremony held on the evening of Yom Hazikaron, as it transformed into Yom Ha'atzmaut. That was so joyous and I had so much pride in Israel and my own Judaism!
46. Masada and Jerusalem. For me all of Israel is a love song to those locations alone. I love the rich history of the two sites and all the symbolism they hold. I especially enjoyed sunrise on Masada, the view was glorious... .
47. Not during MOTL – On Birthright I went to Independence Hall in Tel Aviv. This was very emotional for me as I couldn't help but remember all of the survivors who had been displaced because no one wanted us, now hearing for the first time that there will always be a home for us in Israel.
48. Israel is such an amazing place. The whole time I was there I had an awesome experience. If I could pick one thing that stood out in my mind it would be the "shira" sessions when everyone would sing along and there was a feeling on unity and connection between everyone there.
49. The first time that we visited the Kotel I felt very close to my spiritual Jewish identity there. I remember the emotions that over came me when I went to pray. I had never felt closer to being Jewish until that day.
50. Being from Israel, I didn't think I would be affected that heavily from the trip back, however it was the first time I had experienced the shift between Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut. I think that was one of the things that effected me greatly. as well as all of the stories and personal experiences of our guide.
51. When we got off the plane we went to a huge tents set up with fresh fruits and we did a tour of the land, we planted our own trees and saw how they made the wine. It was such a positive first impression of Israel.
52. The last night that we spent in Israel, when we had the closing banquet, had the most profound impact on me. Seeing all the young students dancing together with the survivors and chaperones made me understand how far we've managed to come since the holocaust.
53. Yom Ha'atzmaut at the Western Wall with all the other March of the Living participants from all over the world – that was amazing.
54. Going to the Kotel for the first time and praying there after seeing all the destruction left in Eastern Europe. Yad Vashem – seeing the big picture all together what the Jewish life was like (that we saw first hand), how it was destroyed, and what we have today – Israel.

55. Israel was an absolutely integral part of the trip for me. After touring the horrors of the Holocaust in Poland, mentally and emotionally I needed to see and experience the rebirth of Jewish culture and identity in Israel. Being in Israel helped to ground the experience, and gave us tangible hope and light after bearing witness to a history of destruction.
56. Being in Israel, surrounded by Jewish students and the Jewish nation in general, was so uplifting after Poland. I greatly enjoyed Yom Ha'atzmaut... just being able to celebrate Israel's independence in Israel was amazing!
57. The first time I went to the Kotel, in Israel, was probably the highlight or lasting impression of my time in Israel. Since I had not been to Israel before, finally being able to see and feel the Kotel was a very special moment. I had seen pictures, and learnt about it for many years. However, I had never actually had the time to really experience and see what it meant for so many people.
58. There were so many amazing experiences but the most emotional might have been on Masada. The survivor who was on my bus never got to have a Bar Mitzvah so the tour guide had arranged to have his Bar Mitzvah on top of Masada with our entire bus.
59. Spending Shabbos on the Kineret was amazing. I do not observe shabbos, but spending it there, going to shul and singing with everyone, it made me feel like I belonged to something meaningful.
60. The most momentous moment in Israel was stepping off the plane outside. Kissing the ground as soon as I touched it and realizing that although I had never in my life been here before, I was home.
61. Israel was amazing. It is the most beautiful place in the world. There is so much pride and love in Israel. It truly is heaven on Earth. I can't wait to one day go back again.
62. Going to the Kotel had the most impact on me because I think it is such an amazing thing to see Jews from all over the world come and pray beside one another at such a historical site.
63. Celebrating Yom HaZikaron on a kibbutz with real Israelis, and then turning that in to a celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut. Living in the Diaspora, I would commemorate those holidays as I would commemorate Remembrance Day in Canada. But having gone through Poland, and seeing with my own eyes that horrors that the Jewish people have endured, made this Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut much more significant for me. I believe that my experience in Poland really tied up my connection to the State of Israel. The holocaust didn't CAUSE the creation of Israel, but it sure shows just how important a State for the Jewish people is.



Overall Impact of the March Experience

1. The March of the Living taught me about tolerance. It showed me that any group of people can be targeted. I am much more aware of the world around me now.
2. The March I'd have to say has definitely motivated my Jewish identity and since the march I have become a total Zionist, and even enjoy defending Israel, and our people on a daily basis against ignorant people. Because of the march I feel that I am way more motivated to participate/defend causes/those that need help.
3. My sense of Jewish identity increased after MOL. I obviously knew I was Jewish before and was proud of it, but going on MOL made me even more proud and aware of my history.
4. I try to say the Mourners Kaddish every night before I go to bed. I often light a candle and say the prayer.
5. Being aware that just because I did not go to a Jewish high school and live a very assimilated [life], does not mean I have to lose myself as a Jew. I am determined to live a life following more Jewish rules and to have a family that grows up to hopefully love their religion.
6. [The overall impact of the March caused me to consider] moving to Israel to be more immersed in Judaism.
7. My sense of Jewish identity was already strong. This trip just intensified what I had already felt. Never again, and to preserve Judaism.
8. The motivation to raise any children I may have Jewish is now even more important to me.
9. Acceptance of diverse religions and people is a quality that the March of the Living has given to me.
10. [The overall impact of the trip increased my] desire to travel to Israel – after visiting Israel on march of the living, I was inspired to participate in a gap year program, and plan on making aliyah at some point after college.
11. I have been even more motivated to educate other people about the holocaust and fight against anti-Semitism. Now I speak out much more when I hear anti-Semitic or racist comments.
12. I felt that the March of the living most strongly influenced my awareness of the need to be involved when confronted with Anti-Semitism. Before the March of the Living I held strong beliefs but did not always make my voice heard. Since the March of the living I have made it a constant and present aspect of my life to speak up when I am confronted with Anti-Semitism because so many people in the past suffered because of no reason other than their identity. Therefore I need to stand strong for my identity and what I believe in.

13. [What is most] important to me is a mixture of my commitment to human rights, and combating genocide. Ever since MOTL my awareness of these issues has risen immensely, and it is only because of MOTL that I wanted to learn more. In university I am a 4 yr Conflict Resolution Studies major, chosen because of my MOTL experience. This is where I have grown the desire to become committed to human rights and combating genocide.
14. Commitment to Human Rights. MOL gave me first-hand exposure to what happens when racism goes unchecked and basic human rights are disregarded; therefore making me a more vocal advocate of human rights.
15. After the march I slowly became more aware of my Jewish faith and my Jewish practices and I put much more effort into maintaining them and expanding them.
16. I definitely agree that the by being a participant on the March of the Living, I have become much more committed to being a more tolerant person to others. It really prepares you for the real world (which is extremely diverse).
17. [The March gave me the] motivation to [combat] the claims of the holocaust not happening. Taught me, how to approach this belief in a calm educated manner.
18. [The March increased my] awareness of the need to be involved when confronted with Anti-Semitism.
19. I think that the March of the Living made my commitment to the Jewish people and Israel much stronger. As well it made me more committed to being more tolerant of others and fighting racism and genocide.
20. By virtue of the total experience, one becomes aware of two basic facts. The interconnectedness of the human experience, and the fragility of life. The Holocaust did not have to happen, and could have been stopped had sensitivity to life been a higher value in German society. This is not a unique sensitivity, and we see many societies today that lack it, and so execute similar fates on minorities in their borders. The understanding that comes with the March means that participants bear responsibility to act, in small or large parts, to promote a more sensitive, caring world.
21. It definitely motivated me to combat intolerance and racism more. I was raised in an observant home, but the trip also made me a prouder Jew.
22. The March of the Living gave me the opportunity to connect to my heritage and people in an engaging and inspiring way. I am now living a observant Jewish life and commit my life to linking the chain of tradition to my children.
23. The March of the Living most strongly influenced my commitment to human rights and to combatin genocide. Since I returned from my trip I have engaged in a number of activities relating to spreading awareness of the genocide in Darfur and other human rights violations across th globe. The MOL definitely heightened my sense of awareness of these issues and instilled in me a desire to ensure the promise of “never again”.

24. The most lasting impression of the March of the Living was that no matter where you are in the world that Jews can connect and have the same feelings and what joy togetherness can bring.

25. The one that I care about the most [after the March] is accepting and respecting people because they are who they are and not because of their race, religion, color and nationality. As well as combating injustice towards weaker parts of the population.

26. I have increased my motivation to send my children to Jewish school because this is what made me want to participate in the March in the first place, and because by having a good background in Jewish history I was able to relate and think about the topics discussed on the March better.

27. [The March of the Living increased my] motivation to observe Jewish rituals, mostly influenced the tone that Rabbi Black set, and by some of the words given by the survivor Jack. This has been the most valuable because my only identity today is that of a religious Jew, and it's the most precious gift I have ever been given. I feel that by keeping the laws and living by the Torah, I am combating anti-Semitism in the most profound way, and living as a proud Jew in the most complete way.

28. I am very sensitive when it comes to racism and anti-Semitism. After the March of the Living, I realized how much anti-Semitism exist and that it needs to be prevented and stopped.

29. March of the Living had an impact on every aspect of my life. It changed how I saw anti-Semitism, racism, Jewish studies, marrying Jewish and having a bigger part in Jewish causes. It also changed me as a person, Jewish and in everyday life.

For this experience I am forever grateful! Morris and Roberta, you two are truly remarkable people and anyone who get's to travel with you and experience this with you is extremely lucky! love you both!

30. My desire to move to Israel was greatly increased by an understanding of just what Israel means to the Jewish people today. In two months I will in fact be making aliyah and in no small part because of my experiences on the March of the Living.

31. This experience has instilled in me the need to be vocal when confronted with any sort of discrimination – be it anti-Semitism, racism, homophobia, etc. As well, it has majorly increased my motivation to respond to Holocaust denial for we can never allow people to forget and thus allow history to repeat itself.

32. This trip gave me a better idea of what becomes at stake if we let the Holocaust become forgotten or ignored.



33. The March of the Living increased my desire to make sure that no cultural or religious group disappear, mine included.
34. The March of the Living increased my desire to combat anti-Semitism and speak up against intolerance. The trip helped me better understand how anti-Semitism develops and why it is important to combat it and change the attitudes of others.
35. I come from a religious family, all of my aunts and uncles live in Israel as does my grandmother. Before going on the March of the living I already had a strong Jewish background and felt a strong connection to Israel. After high school I spent a year studying Torah in Israel and have enhanced my Jewish Identity. It is hard to tell how much impact the March of the living has made on me . The march of the living introduced me to several types of Jews.
36. I strongly believe the March of the Living increased my sense of Jewish identity. I much more proud of my Jewish heritage and thus am much more inclined to defend it whether that be through participating in activities supporting a Jewish cause or simply educating people around me about what we as a people are all about.
37. This trip has made me want to tell the survivors stories, so that the holocaust is never forgotten.
38. Looking back now on my views from before March of the Living, I know that I have become more observant and began to understand and care more about Judaism. I cannot say that it was attributed directly to what I learned on the March, though the experience had an impact. The area in which MOL impacted me and my views were to peruse studies on the Holocaust as well as to open my eyes to tolerance within other racial groups, as well as responding to those who claim the Holocaust never happened.
39. The March of the Living increased my motivation to respond to claim that the holocaust didn't happen – I've spent time with survivors and I've visited the sites of terrible death and destruction. Even though I would have challenged such a claim before the march, now I can challenge it first hand.
40. The March impacted my sense of maintaining the Jewish religion, marrying Jewish and raising children Jewish. I realized how important these aspects are in the grand scale of keeping Judaism alive after millions of Jews were murdered for being who they were. I realized I had the chance to be who I am and I owe it to them to keep being Jewish and keep the Jewish faith alive.
41. [The March of the Living had an impact on my] desire to learn more about Jewish values. As a nation we cannot give up and need to continue to learn and practice our long-lasting traditions.

42. [My belief in the importance] of education of children in Jewish faith and school was impacted as a result of the March. It is so important for each generation to continue to learn about Judaism. Especially because mine is the last generation to be lucky enough to learn about the Holocaust from survivors, so we now have a responsibility to teach later generations of Jewish kids.
43. The March of the Living played a very significant role in my decision to make aliyah and join the Israel Defence Forces. From my experience, my Jewish identity only grew and I felt a need to contribute more to the Jewish homeland, Israel. It is very important to me to fight for the land in which now belongs to the Jews and to fight for all those who perished in the Holocaust. Without March of the Living, I would not be in the army today.
44. With regards to Holocaust deniers, my sense of importance has changed dramatically. I feel in some ways that it is of vital importance that the world be fully versed in the true happenings of the Holocaust, and that the vicious attitudes of those who deny the happenings be dispelled completely. I know what I have seen. And I know what others have seen, and I have heard and I pass along the testimony of the survivors from whom I have been bestowed the honor and responsibility of knowing their stories. I feel that in many ways those who deny the Holocaust are the same who deny history.
45. The March of the Living most impacted my desire to live a Jewish life. Though I was already an observant Jew, it made the experience so much more real and meaningful; I began to feel personally responsible to strengthen the Jewish people and make up for, to whatever extent I could, had been lost in the Holocaust. I felt that the future of the Jewish people is in Israel, and it motivated me to enhance my own religious experience by spending two years studying in an Israeli yeshiva.
46. The March increased my motivation to respond to claims of the Holocaust not happening: I think that before the trip, I would have known that I should respond if anyone made a claim denying the Holocaust... but I would have probably been too afraid to speak up. Now, if I heard anyone utter even a single word regarding the possible falseness of the Holocaust, there is no way that I could stay silent.
47. [The March impacted] my sense of Jewish Identity – I feel more integrated with the Jewish community than I did before March of the Living.
48. With survivors slowly passing away, it is important to hear the stories, visit the place where it occurred, and take this knowledge to pass on from generation to generation. The March of the Living does that. It helps create tolerance because you learn what it's like to be the target. It emphasized the importance of Israel, Jewish life and passing on traditions so they don't get lost, and the pain those in the Holocaust suffered to keep the faith alive, is not without just cause.
49. Due to my previous Jewish education many of the questions I already had a strong connection to prior to the MOL. However in particular I think the March had a profound impact on my views of human rights. I am currently in medical school but I remember in my interviews talking about how this trip pushed me to pursue a career in health care.

50. I've become very involved in STAND (students taking action now Darfur) in response to the trip. We always say never again, and that had an impact on me, so I wanted to be involved in a group that could make that statement a reality.
51. I think the one that had the most impact on me was a desire to pursue Jewish studies and the motivation to observe Jewish rituals such as kashrut.
52. [The March of the Living enabled me to] respond to claims of the holocaust not happening. The March made me a witness to the terror and reality that was the holocaust, its no longer a removed story... .
53. Willingness to support Israel – It was only after visiting Poland & Israel on the MOL that I realized how important the state of Israel was to Jews, and what a miraculous country it really is. Commitment to combating racism – After visiting camps in Poland, and knowing that the world stood by as the atrocities were taking place, it makes me sick that such things are still happening today. Again, so few in the world are paying attention.
54. I am a supporter of Israel and am not afraid to say so, even if I am not good at debating with dissenters. I am also much more comfortable with my Jewish identity than I was before, despite having more non-Jewish friends than Jewish ones.
55. The March helped me form an even stronger sense of Jewish Identity by showing me what happens when this is disregarded. My experience on March of the Living showed me the importance of such organizations as the IDF, human rights organizations and others.
56. My experience on the March certainly made me more aware of my responsibility to be aware of racism and discrimination against others, especially when it leads to violence, and to speak out against it.
57. Tolerance of other groups: March of the Living very clearly made me realize what baseless hatred of any group can cause. This made me change the way I thought about discrimination – it is never harmless.
58. The March of the Living impacted my ability to fight Holocaust deniers. After seeing all the atrocity, I can't begin to understand how people are denying it ever happened.
59. With regards to my education and providing a Jewish education to my children, the March of the Living has a large role in influencing this decision. I personally feel that it reinforced the idea that it is so important to learn about the Holocaust in order to educate people on what happened to our people and how we have overcome it. I also think that having a Jewish education will allow my children to have a better understanding of themselves and avoid the struggle to find their identity. March of the Living has helped me find myself and understand why my family put me into the Jewish school system. It is important to continue educating our generations so that our culture and traditions will not be forgotten.



60. The March of the Living most deeply impacted my tolerance of other groups. Having grown up in a Jewish school, I was fairly sheltered and never truly wandered outside of my bubble. Had I not had this experience, my encounters with other religions and people of different origins might have gone differently when I went to CGEP. Seeing how the Jewish people were persecuted helped me understand the importance of being open to other minorities and people.
61. Prior to March of the Living, my sense of Judaism was not very high. I never attended Hebrew school, and I did not have many Jewish friends. since my experience on the March of the Living in 2006, my Jewish identity has significantly increased. For a year following my experience, my madrich from my bus and I went to synagogue every Friday evening. I continue today to be involved in as many Jewish activities as I can, and I am currently living in Jerusalem for the summer. as well, I am now pursuing my bachelor of arts degree in Judaic studies.
62. March of the Living made me proud to be Jewish and to defend Judaism and Israel whenever necessary. I was motivated to become educated on the history of Israel in more detail, in order to avoid ignorance and to be able to convey Israel's light to anyone in an effective way.
63. [March of the Living impacted my need to take a role in] combating anti-Semitism and holocaust denial. If we are not going to do it than who is?
64. Because of the March, I have a much stronger desire to be more involved in my Jewish faith, activities and concerns. I want to have a Jewish family and be more observant then I am now. I want to be able to support Israel and Jewish organizations. The March increased my awareness to how much can be lost and gained as a people, and how important my involvement and my voice is.
65. [The March impacted my motivation to respond to claims of the Holocaust not happening – I have met people since who are Holocaust deniers and I have learned so much from the trip that I am able to stand up for my ancestors.
66. Going on the March definitely had a major impact on me taking a year off to study in seminary in Israel, to become even more observant and continue my Jewish studies throughout university.
67. The March of the Living impacted my commitment to human rights.
68. I always loved Israel and travelled there, but after stepping off the plane from Poland I never wanted to leave.
69. I would say the March most strongly impacted my sense of Jewish identity, and forever changed how I understand the Holocaust and what it means to be a Jewish person living in the Diaspora. I feel a strong commitment to passing on my experience to others.
70. After the March, my desire to promote holocaust awareness greatly increased.

71. Sense of Jewish identity – Since going on the March, I do find myself more connected to my Jewish identity. I find myself wanting to be more involved and connected in the Jewish community, and understanding and appreciating various customs much more.
72. My experience on the March of the Living reinforced many of my values and beliefs but the one that I think was changed the most was my desire to interact more with non-Jews. As my Jewish identity was strengthened through the experience I felt as though Jews need to be more present in non-Jewish activities.
73. Because of the March, I feel that going to Israel and really learning about it from the experience of being there and not what we read in the news is important for me since I realize how close we were to not having a state. That being said I feel it is important to return as often as possible to reconnect and not take it for granted that I have a homeland that millions of people dreamed of and never got to see.
74. The March impacted my willingness to donate to Israel, to Jewish causes, to participate in Jewish and non Jewish causes... It reinforced my Jewish identity and reinforced my awareness that it is my duty to help the Jewish community in Montréal and globally as well those in need globally.
75. [The March impacted my responsibility for] combating genocide and for increased tolerance of other groups Also a greater appreciation for Israel.
76. Adherence to the Jewish faith is the most important aspect impacted by the March, because if we do not remember what our ancestors fought for and ensure something like the Holocaust never occurs again, then no one will. Our ancestors went through such a troubling and horrible experience for us to have the lives we live today and this can never be forgotten.
77. The March has increased my desire to make positive change in this world, and to address the inequalities that are so glaring around the world.
78. The one that is most important to me after the March is getting involved in Jewish organizations and causes. I feel this is important to keep up the livelihood associated with Judaism and that it is necessary for outside people to see what Judaism has to offer.
79. The only thing I was sure of after the March was that I wanted to stand up for human rights and that I would not tolerate anyone denying the Holocaust.
80. The March of the Living taught me that there are other ways to express Jewish identity than through religious adherence.
81. The March impacted my need for responding to Holocaust denial, and standing up for Israel's right to exist.
82. Before the March of the Living I never considered moving to Israel, but since the March of the Living I have travelled to Israel once a year because I feel so connected when I go there and more safe than any other place in the world. I definitely have a stronger desire to move to Israel since going on the March of the Living.

83. I learned from the March and subsequent research after that while I had gone to Jewish school and participated in the Jewish community, what I was taught about the holocaust was only half of the story, not even. I think holocaust education within the Jewish community must be improved to extend beyond the fundamentals taught – the Jews were systematically persecuted and murdered.

This is not sufficient. There is so much more history about the Holocaust that is integral to the understanding of that period of time as well as its bearing on the community today. The March helped me understand that there was more I needed to learn – that just knowing the basics of what occurred was not enough.



84. The March made me realize how much we have in common and how important it is to carry on the religion through your children.
85. While I already had a strong connection to the Jewish faith, the March of the Living really gave me strong reasons to live a Jewish-inspired life. Seeing that Jewish communities with their traditions existed in Eastern Europe for so many years, tied me to their destiny. They lived their lives according to Jewish tradition. It meant something to them. They died as Jews, whether they identified or not. Living in a free and open society such as Canada, we are too fortunate to practice our faith, and to me, this was a strong reason to recognize how fortunate I am personally to be able to carry on the Jewish tradition.
86. Because of the March of the Living, I now believe much more strongly in the importance of combating racism, genocide, and fighting for human rights.
87. The March of the Living gave me the motivation to respond to claims of the Holocaust not happening. The March made me a eyewitness to the existence of the camps and no one... can say the Holocaust didn't happen. I am PERSONALLY offended by anyone that either denies or downplays the magnitude of the Holocaust.
88. The March of the Living was my first trip to Israel in a while and it really instilled a sense of pride and desire to live there.
89. The March of the Living taught me to combat deniers of the Holocaust, because it made me realize how dangerous brainwashing and propaganda can be, and how important it is for us to always remember, so that others don't try to erase or change history.
90. The March of the Living helped me realized that Israel is more of a cultural Jewish State than a religious one. I am more culturally Jewish, and appreciate the Jewish culture of food, music, the languages of Hebrew and Yiddish. I am a more spiritual person, and have an appreciation for Jewish and Israeli culture.

91. The March of the Living impacted my observance of Jewish rituals and adherence to the Jewish faith – I am not very religious and the March of the Living did not push me to become any more or less observant than I was raised. This is a good thing about the March of the Living, it accepts and welcomes all Jews regardless of how religious they may be.
92. The March of the Living didn't make me more or less practicing Jew, although I was motivated to spend a year in Israel learning about Judaism.

How the Experience Impacted Alumni Decisions

1. The March of the Living opened my eyes to how lucky I am to know that for the time being I am happy healthy, free, and have my family with me. The March has made me see that you should always be aware that things can go from good to hell in a matter of minutes and that we need to treasure every moment before it may vanish.
2. I am seriously considering living and working in Israel at some point in my future, which was not something that I was considering strongly before the March. I am now also very sure I want to marry someone Jewish or that can completely accept the Jewish faith.
3. I will live and work to better society and keep people informed. Also I developed great friendships with all those on the march... .
4. I am still close with the people from my March of the Living even though they live far away... .
5. The March of the Living made an impact on my decision to pursue certain topics in University including classes covering human rights, racism and genocide. Since the March of the Living I have had the opportunity to advocate for holocaust education and Israel leading me to pursue a career in journalism and expression. I have also travelled back to Israel since the March of the Living and plan on spending an extended amount of time in Israel pursuing study in a topic relating to Jewish identity. I also find that I have developed significant relationships with people who are also March of the Living alumnus (especially Jewish students) who have had similar experiences and who believe in the importance of advocate for the same reasons.
6. The most important impact was schooling choices, because although I learned a lot on March of the Living, it left me with wanting to learn more.
7. Because of the March, I decided to further study the Holocaust and Jewish history at a university level, I also became engaged to a Jewish man because (among other reasons) it's important to me that my children be raised in a Jewish home and that they are educated about the Holocaust, as I was.

8. As a result of the March, I had the opportunity to forge lasting friendships with a diverse group of Jewish students with the Toronto Jewish community, from all religious backgrounds.
9. I met amazing people on the March of the Living who helped me get through that rough 2 weeks and who I've stayed close with up until now.
10. Since the March, I have been employed by or volunteered for most of the Jewish Community organizations based in Toronto, with a focus on advocacy. They are important in themselves, as well as providing tools to make a positive impact on Canadian society, an important part of preventing discrimination worldwide.
11. The March of the Living increased my awareness of the importance of actively promoting/supporting both Zionism and Judaism.
12. I ended up in Jewish work, and while the March was not the sole starting point for it, I think it had an impact on my eventual decision to become a Jewish professional. It also made me want to return to Israel, which I did for four months in university. I volunteered for Magen David Adom, learned Torah, and did other programs. This 4 month trip had a big impact on my life and the March made me want to go on this trip. It was a stepping stone.
13. As a result of the March, I will be graduating with a bachelors in Jewish studies, I am a teacher in Jewish schools and look forward to building a Jewish life and family of my own.
14. By virtue of giving me a stronger Jewish identity, the March has impacted many facets of my life. I have been forced to think about what the ramifications are of any decision on my Judaism.
15. The March has made me truly understand the importance of caring on my Jewish faith and traditions and I have now realized that without marrying within our faith, there is a good chance my children will not grow up Jewish. If this were the case, I think I will have failed to accomplish one of my major duties as a Jewish person to my Jewish people.
16. I am now taking Jewish Education and hoping to teach in a Jewish school. I am focusing a lot of my studies on the Holocaust. When teaching students, I feel as though because of the experience of March of the Living, I will be able to offer students a better understanding of the Holocaust and its implications.
17. Significant relationships – some of my best friends today are people I met on March of the Living.



18. I have found that the March of the Living gave me the strength to place greater impetus on the people with whom I fraternize. I have been provided with a broader scope of people, but I have also been taught a harsh lesson. It has become increasingly important to me to be not only tolerant but loving of people outside of the Jewish faith as well as within.
19. The March of the Living definitely in part led to me spending two years in an Israeli yeshiva, and then to attend Yeshiva University in New York, where I hope to also study for rabbinic ordination after college.
20. I took a year off and lived in Israel and I attribute a large part of that decision to my experience on the March of the Living. The March (along with Biluim Israel which I went on right after) increased my love for Israel and my desire to spend time there.
21. I discovered a great passion for anthropology on March of the Living, and am pursuing it in every way possible now. Hoping to work in Israel.
22. I ended up dating a girl I met on the March am now in love with her.
23. After the March, I feel that I have a different perspective on certain aspects of my life after seeing what hate can do, and now realize that this world is far from peaceful.
24. I believe education is key. Educating your family, friends and all those who cross your path is the best way to create awareness and prevent something like this from happening again.

I presented an overview of my experience on the March of the Living to a University class of mainly non-Jewish students, it would amaze you what they do not know. Not only that, I was amazed at what they wanted to know and how much they wanted to learn. While most presentations were ignored, mine left the entire class asking for more. All it takes is some education to increase awareness, create peace, and keep out ancestors memory alive.

25. After high school, I volunteered in the IDF for a year and a half. My experience on the March was a large part of my motivation to do this, as well as to make aliyah in due course.
26. Career choices – being on the March of the Living strengthened my desire to be involved in a career that helped people truly in their time of need and was impartial to race, gender, age or ethnicity. I now just completed my first year of medical school at McMaster.
27. I have made sincere and diligent efforts to educate myself about Judaism and Israel. I makes me very happy to do so. After the March, I gave talks at my synagogue, schools, focused school projects on Holocaust education, and became involved in genocide prevention. I have volunteered at Jewish and non-Jewish organizations. I live with a Jewish roommate in Jewish Studies at U of T, and together we discuss, debate, and help each other learn about Israel and Judaism. We have been on Birthright and to Israel together again in the past few years.

28. The March of the Living instilled in me a desire to learn more about Jewish history and even to consider pursuing that area as a career. Judaism has always been an important part of my identity, and the March of the Living strengthened that even more and made me more committed to being Jewish.
29. Educational choices: the March of the Living helped me recognize the importance to learn more about Jewish heritage and to teach others what I have learned. I learned that there are many different ways to do this: see the artifacts (concentration camps), learn history – through educators and survivors, and to feel your emotions and how this will have an impact on your life. Reflecting is key for adaptation – because the way you think and speak among others can help you adapt what you have learned into your life and have an effect on others.
30. I think the March of the Living puts into perspective how important it is to make a difference and help others who don't have a voice, so I hope to pursue a career where I am helping others, whether it be in education, social work or law.
31. I chose to take a religion class on Judaism, Christianity and Islam in my first semester in college. I wanted to learn more about religions outside of my own faith, as a result of my experience on the March of the Living.
32. I want to be educated on the Arab-Israeli conflict and to spread Israel's message of peace. I want to work in a field that allows me to make lives better for people who are discriminated against or whose rights are being infringed. I am still friends with many people who I met on the March of the Living.
33. After the March, I have become closer with many non-Jews, only to realize how uneducated they are about Judaism, and have been able to teach them a lot about the culture and the religion.
34. My interest in human rights was definitely encouraged by my participation in the March of the Living, and I began working in that field as soon as I returned from the trip.
35. [After the March] I refuse to be around people who are intolerant of others and who think racism is funny.
36. I took many Jewish and holocaust classes at University and I continued to teach others about the holocaust whenever I could.
37. I think the March of the Living made me more tolerant of people – not just races and religions, because I learned that we are all people regardless of where we come from and how we got there. I feel less judgmental, more open to new experiences and learning about others, and it influenced me to have a career where I will make a difference for people.
38. Studying international relations, and wanting to become part of the diplomatic core, was definitely helped by my experience with the March of the Living.

39. Since going on the March I have gone on to study in university History. My areas of study focus on Nazis Germany, the Holocaust, how the world ended up where it was during the war and how we are still today in 2010 recovering from it.
40. The March of the Living sparked a desire to participate in both Jewish, but especially non-Jewish causes that related to the pursuit of human rights and social justice. I look at my participation through a Jewish lens, but my fundamental connection to the rights of all human beings to be treated fairly was something that came out of my experiences on the March.

