

## Be-Longing



June and July were months of transitions, travelling and hosting delegations.

Our son Daniel, graduated MJDS and delivered a speech that a native English speaker would have been proud of. He has come a long way in 2 years and will transition into Nicolet high school.

As a family, we took a road trip, enjoyed the fabulous outdoors North America has to offer, and returned to our home away from home, Milwaukee.

Our daughter, Neta just returned from Interlaken, where she spent a month, making friends and feeling right at home.

Our son, Yonatan went to BBYO's ILTC, building his leadership skills for the future and feeling at home among his peers.

We hosted the Partnership2Gether Steering Committee from Israel's (Sovev Kinneret region), Tulsa, Madison and St. Paul in June.

For many of the Israeli delegates, Milwaukee means home. The same can be said for the Yaad Shay Shoshany Young Leadership group or our Teen Mifgash who just left. Some of them will apply to be Shin shins. Every August, our Shin shins leave Milwaukee after a year of intense experiences, only to come back again and again, for bar mitzvahs and weddings.

What is it about this place that makes so many people feel at home?

During the Steering Committee, I explored this question by asking ten local Milwaukee folks to lead a 2.5 hour tour called "My Milwaukee" taking the visitors to the places they love and feel connected to. I was amazed at the response I got. So many fun tours focusing on food, architecture, ethnicity, beer, nature and more were offered and enjoyed.

I also found myself in the awkward and uncomfortable (so I thought) position of having to find host families for 4 separate delegations (a total of 25 families). I was pleased to find that people were more than happy to open up their hearts and homes and show these Israeli guests a really good time here. This is definitely a big contributor to the feeling of be-longing here.

What is it about Israel that draws people to long for it and travel so many miles?

It's that feeling of belonging you get when you are with family. You don't have to actually be related to someone to achieve this feeling, although in Milwaukee, you never know...

So, my thoughts are turned to understanding why I long to be in certain places and those tend to be the places I belong. My kibbutz, for example and I am guessing, Milwaukee, when we return home in a year.

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