



## #StandStrong #StandProud

**By Pam Morris, Early Learning Center director**

Have you seen the meme making its way around Facebook and possibly other social media sites? The one that reads: #WillYouHideMe? Pretty jarring no? When I first saw that it shocked me to my core. Is this what it has come to?

For those of you who haven't seen it or might not know the meaning, it is the very real question that Jewish people all over the world are apparently thinking about, "Will my non-Jewish neighbor/friend hide me and my family should the worst come to pass?" And this isn't just a question that random people are asking. Many of us, myself included, wonder, are we on the precipice of "Never Again" being now? Imagine trying to stay positive after that!

But let me turn it around for you, as a wise person did for me this past Shabbat. Instead of #WillYouHideMe, it should be #StandStrong #StandProud. This is just what nearly 300,000 people did last Tuesday on the mall in Washington DC at the rally held in support of Israel and the Jewish people. And nearly another 250,000 people joined this rally, this **peaceful rally**, including me. No one was shrinking from the conversation. No one was backing away from the fight. It was, instead, a moment of solidarity. Jewish people and supporters traveled by plane, train, automobile and Vimeo, to stand strong, to stand proud and say, "I am a Jew. I support Israel. I support the Jewish people." And then the narrative was much different.

This question of who will support me, who will stand up for me, who will stand up and support the Jewish community - well, there were hundreds of thousands. And we weren't shrinking from the conversation. We had actors, musicians, politicians, hostage's families, regular people - all taking part to say, "We stand with Israel." This was so different from the 1930's and 40's in America and all over the world.



The news that continues to roll in from many parts of the world, including but not limited to Israel, is the rise in Anti-Semitic actions, events. These numbers have risen at college campuses and there seems to be an equating of Hamas, their terrorist actions and the Palestinian people, the residents of Gaza. But when you see reports from Israel, you see the Israel Defense Forces shielding the Gaza residents as they try to flee from the actions of the terrorist groups. It isn't the Israelis that are keeping the Gaza residents from having food, water, fuel to live. It is Hamas. In the north, it is Hezbollah that is attacking Israel.

I try to make the shift in my perspective to the offensive team (here comes the football reference again). I highlight the group of cowboys from Arkansas and Montana who flew to Israel to aid the Israeli farmers during the Israel-Hamas War. I wear my pins proudly, reminding everyone of the hostages still being held by Hamas. The ones that have still not been visited by the American Red Cross. I wear my Jewish star for all to see.

I won't ask, will you hide me? I say, #IWillStandStrong #IWillStandProud #IWillSupport Israel #IAmAJew. Will you join me?

Shabbat Shalom.