

Introduction



I grew up in a home where my parents taught us to have a good work ethic and a good neshama, a good soul. We were also taught to take pride in our Jewish identities and to be thankful for and speak out for Israel. My father used to always say “stand up, speak out, show up as a Zionist.”

During my over 30 years with Hadassah, I have worked alongside others to combat the dangerous rise in antisemitism. As Hadassah national president, I remain committed to fighting hate.

Since October 7, I have heard from Hadassah members and Jewish women across the country about how antisemitism is impacting them personally, professionally and as parents. Jewish women of all ages are feeling isolated, afraid, threatened and believe it is necessary to conceal their Jewish identity. Many of us imagine that the unchecked, rampant antisemitism in our communities today is similar to how our parents and grandparents felt as Jews in the 1940s. Yet in the face of it all, Jewish women are showing resilience and embracing and sharing their Jewish and Zionist identities with pride.

From Fear to Resilience: Women Facing Antisemitism, shares gut-wrenching stories of antisemitism from women around the country. We hope these stories will help illustrate to friends, neighbors, legislators and colleagues the antisemitism women are facing each and every day.

I want to thank the over 1,000 people who responded to Hadassah’s survey for bravely sharing their stories of antisemitism so we could create this powerful report. I know it is not easy to relive these harrowing and difficult experiences.

As the largest women’s Zionist and largest Jewish women’s organization in the US, Hadassah is educating and empowering supporters, building community, cultivating pride in Zionism, and providing opportunities and resources to speak out everywhere from personal conversations to local, state and national advocacy.

Our work to help people, especially women, build community and feel empowered to take on antisemitism and anti-Zionism is more important than ever. We cannot let antisemitism be normalized.

I am proud of the work that Hadassah is doing to combat rising antisemitism, including responding to efforts by professional associations to isolate and blacklist Jews and Zionists, working to advance legislation to combat antisemitism in Congress and speaking out against biased ceasefire resolutions in towns across the US.

Thank you,
Carol Ann Schwartz
Hadassah National President



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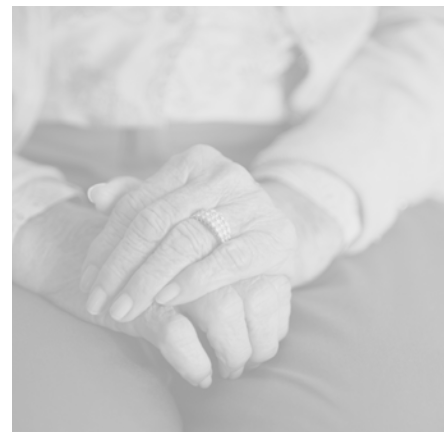
This report is for informational purposes only and the viewpoints expressed by the survey respondents represent personal opinion and do not necessarily reflect Hadassah's positions.

Executive Summary



Antisemitism Impacts People's Everyday Lives

As the largest women's Zionist and Jewish women's organization in the US, Hadassah sought to understand how this dramatic rise in antisemitism touches every aspect of Jewish women's day-to-day lives, from family to work to interacting in their communities. We gathered over 1,000 responses from around the country asking about experiences with antisemitism in the last two years. Hadassah heard from real Jewish women across the country about their lived experiences, who will remain anonymous to protect their safety and well-being. Sixty-four percent of Jewish women we heard from said antisemitism impacted their life, work or relationships. This report tells the harrowing stories of how these brave women are facing antisemitism.



Key Findings

Of Jewish women responding to Hadassah's survey:

64%

said antisemitism impacted their life, work or relationships.

62%

felt physically or psychologically unsafe.

52%

felt the need to hide their Jewish identity.

33%

experienced hate speech because of their Jewish or Zionist identity.

22%

were excluded from groups or events because of their Jewish or Zionist identity.

A group of 800 Jewish women served as the baseline for these key findings.

Antisemitism Is on the Rise and Manifesting in Alarming Ways

In the US, hate incidents against Jews reached an [all-time high](#) in 2023, with a nearly [400 percent](#) spike in the weeks following Hamas' October 7, 2023, attack on Israel. Jews are only [2.4 percent](#) of the US population, but according to the FBI, were the targets of [68 percent](#) of religiously motivated hate crimes in 2023 — a [63 percent](#) increase from 2022.

Executive Summary



Stories

"I've certainly lost people in my social circle for being openly Jewish."

"When I spoke at a city council meeting against a resolution that called Israel an apartheid state, I was booed, hissed and screamed at with 'kill the Jews.'"

"I have close friends that are unwilling to listen to me about how I feel regarding the war between Israel and Gaza, antisemitism on college campuses and the impact of the rise of antisemitism."

"I was physically attacked at a rally and my Israeli flag was stolen and burnt in front of me."

"I live in fear of verbal and physical abuse due to being Jewish."

"I hope my boys are learning what it means to be a real mensch by watching how their parents and community are standing up to antisemitism."



Women Feel Isolated, Afraid, Threatened and Are Hiding Their Identities

Jewish women shared stories about being singled out at work by their coworkers and some have even had customers abandon them. They are surrounded by misinformation and struggling to correct it. They have been isolated and excluded by people they used to call friends. They have been yelled at by strangers. They can no longer get appointments with some health professionals. They are trying to find safe environments for their children, who are being harassed at school. They are attending synagogue with their families, even as they watch the door for a violent attacker. Many feel unsafe showing symbols of their faith publicly.

Women Are Also Finding Strength and Resilience

In the face of this shocking antisemitism, Jewish women are showing their resilience by finding community and empowering each other to take pride in their Jewish and Zionist identities.



Isolated.

Alienated. Excluded. Alone.



Women Reported Feeling Isolated

Twenty-two percent of survey respondents were excluded from groups or events because of their Jewish or Zionist identity. Jewish women shared stories of how antisemitism is causing them to become isolated on social media and in community, professional and other groups. Women are feeling unsupported in the face of antisemitism and misinformation. Many have even lost close friends. At work, they feel silenced by their colleagues and fear losing business because of their Jewish identities. They are experiencing hateful backlash on social media, and in community, professional and other groups.



Why This Matters

- Isolation is associated with [higher anxiety, depression and suicide rates](#).¹
- Women experiencing social isolation have a [25 percent increased risk for significant health issues](#), including heart disease, stroke, diabetes and dementia.²
- Older women are particularly affected by loneliness. [Thirty percent of women](#) 65 and older who reported high levels of loneliness also had an increased risk of heart disease.³

Stories

Ghosted by Friends

"Many of my old friends have not reached out to lend friendly support, even knowing that I have family in Israel."

"When I mention a Jewish holiday or event I make people around me very uncomfortable."

"The biggest way I've been affected is losing lifelong friends over being Jewish and supporting Israel. It's been a lonely, isolating year."

"I have lost a few acquaintances, one friend and two family members as a result of my support for Israel. No one initiated a discussion; rather, they dropped me quietly or didn't return overtures."

"My non-Jewish family members won't talk to me."

"One friend I tried to greet said she, 'had no words for me' with more anger in her voice than I thought she was even capable of. The feeling was like I had been punched in the gut."

Isolated.

Alienated. Excluded. Alone.



"I no longer trust any of my 'friends,' I no longer trust anyone in my community. One 'friend' said 'They asked for it!' Another said ' Hamas did it because of politics. '"

"A few months after the attack, a childhood friend messaged me on Facebook, saying he didn't want to be associated with 'dirty Zionists' and wished harm upon me at the hands of Hamas."

"My best friend of over ten years ghosted me after I defended Israel's actions online. She chose to defend Hamas on social media and called Zionists 'genocidal.' I have never felt so hurt by someone I loved."

Shunned on Campus and in Communities

"There have been numerous antisemitic incidents in my neighborhood, and our local public high school has spread misinformation about the conflict to students."

"I am especially worried because I see antisemitic teachers presenting lies to students. The Massachusetts Teacher's Association is extremely antisemitic, and they are brainwashing our students in a way that could lead to another Holocaust if this continues for the next decade."

"Our community had anti-Zionist protests and at least one business banned Zionists from entry."

"I was unable to attend a gay Pride march because I felt unsafe and unwelcome as a Jew."

"I was thrown out of an AA meeting for being Jewish."

"I have been wanting to drop out of college due to the antisemitism I have faced. Fellow students are glorifying suicide, and I have had professors call the war a genocide, disagree about what Zionism means to me and allow a non-Jewish student to argue with me about antisemitism."

"Our community was not allowed to host an exhibit about confronting hate together with Black and Asian communities because of a walk out by museum employees."

Excluded at Work

"We've had several new patients cancel when they found out the dentist (my husband) and I were Jewish. It impacts us psychologically and financially."

"I used to run an annual retreat. My assistant reached out to urge participants to withdraw to protest my Zionism. We had to cancel. I'm unlikely to be able to recover this side business."

Isolated.

Alienated. Excluded. Alone.



"My workplace shared antisemitic websites and information to staff as credible resources. When I suggested these weren't appropriate, I was removed from committees, written up for taking too much vacation time and had my hours reduced."

"I have felt excluded and unsupported due to anti-Jewish sentiment. People I interacted with online found out I was Jewish and blamed me for deaths in Gaza. One left my business a bad review on Yelp saying that non-Jewish students would not be safe at my music studio."

"Antisemitism was terrible on the college campus where I was working. I've learned to trust no one outside the Jewish community. In essence, Jews are alone."

"Jews that I know in my workplace feel silenced, disrespected and othered."

"A work association came out with a pro-Palestinian, anti-Israeli statement that I pushed back on, and I ultimately dropped out of that group."

"I'm an acupuncturist. I treat patients in a recovery home once a week. I treated a patient and was told by management not to come for the next treatments due to the patient's religious reasons."

"My job has continuously become a hostile work environment with employees coming in with keffiyehs and flags of Palestine over maps of Israel. I tried to help them fill gaps in understanding. I have lost 90% of my friends and community, I have had to rebuild my life."

"Working at a public defender organization, following October 7, 2023, I received an anti-Israel email from one organization containing several vile antisemitic statements and tropes. Internal staff emails at my organization also contained language that made me feel extremely uncomfortable and unable to express my personal views publicly. I decided to leave my position."

"I am a psychiatrist. A former patient posted online that I hate all Palestinians and think they should all be killed (untrue of course). I blocked them. Another former patient said 'If you can't come clean on where you stand on Palestine then I am not sure I can trust you as my doctor.'"

"Work colleagues attempting to justify the murder, torture, rape and kidnapping of Jews by adding 'context,' as if there is any context in which this behavior is justifiable."

"I've seen the DEI department at my job refuse to highlight Jewish Heritage Month in May while they give full support to every other minority group. I've been fired by clients for refusing to discuss my personal opinions of events in Israel, which have no place in my role of providing treatment to those with mental illness."

Afraid.

Angry. Anxious. Worried. Sad.

Women Reported Feeling Afraid

Sixty-two percent of survey respondents felt physically or psychologically unsafe. Antisemitism is making many Jewish women feel afraid and anxious. Women shared stories of the fears they live with every day in a world that is growing increasingly hostile to Jews and Zionists. Fear is permeating every part of their lives. They are afraid to go to services, they are worried that their families will be attacked and they are losing trust in organizations.



Why This Matters

- Living with consistent fear can increase health risks, including weakening the [immune system](#), risking [cardiovascular health](#)⁴ and creating [gastrointestinal issues](#).⁵
- Fear can lead to the development or worsening of mental health issues, [including](#) depression, psychosis and in extreme cases suicide.⁶
- Persistent fear can even lead to [memory loss](#).⁷

Stories

Overwhelmed with Fear

"I am more anxious. I am never totally relaxed. I am never totally happy. I am never totally joyful. I worry about Israel and the hostages daily. I worry about the planet and the hatred towards Israel and Jews. I worry about the future in a way I never have before."

"I am sad, angry and afraid in a way that I have rarely experienced. I feel heartbroken. I avoid conversations with certain friends."

"I don't feel safe. My friends think I'm imagining not feeling safe and think there is something wrong with me."

"I also find myself angry and losing trust in the world and in organizations in which I'd believed and supported. It doesn't feel good to be angry and fearful."

"Feelings of sadness, fear and sometimes anger come over me, and some nights I have trouble sleeping because of it."

"In my work as a psychotherapist, my Jewish clients and I all have increased levels of anxiety, headaches and appetite disturbance."

Afraid.

Angry. Anxious. Worried. Sad.

Afraid to Worship

“When I go to shul I don’t sit by the door. I sit away from it and have a plan of escape.”

“I am afraid to worship in person. My interaction with my synagogue has stopped. I do not volunteer either. I am scared.”

Unsettled in My Community

“Concern for my children’s safety at school, losing friends who began blurring the line between anti-Israel speech and anti-Jewish speech, being much more wary of unfamiliar faces at synagogue.”

“I feel afraid all the time in public and fear the harassment of pro-Palestinian rallies, at museums, on transportation and on the streets! It’s been utterly awful having people chant for the destruction of an entire nation!”

“Antisemitic actions from within LGBTQ communities made me afraid to attend Pride events and fearful of showing my identity as a Jew in Queer spaces.”

“A woman nearby had a tote with something that identified her as Jewish printed on it. I’m thinking that she seems not at all phased about carrying this bag in public, and I wondered what that was like. She caught my eye, and then without looking at the bag, turned it around, so the Jewish images wouldn’t be seen. In that moment I realized that she was afraid too.”

“My medical care is at a university hospital, where anti-Israel demonstrations have taken place. I worry about who is treating me, what their beliefs are and how it might affect my medical care.”

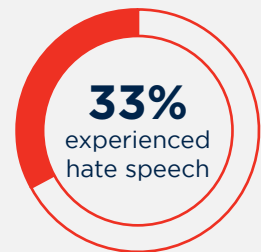
Threatened.

Targeted. Harassed.



Jewish Women Reported Feeling Threatened

Thirty-three percent of survey respondents experienced hate speech because of their Jewish or Zionist identity. Jewish women have been physically attacked, threatened with violence — including rape — and verbally assaulted with cruel, vile messages online and in person. Their communities, places of worship and businesses have been targeted with Nazi marches, threatened with bombs and vandalized with antisemitic graffiti. These threatening acts are happening every day in schools, hospital waiting rooms, elevators, airplanes, stores, parking lots and more. Jewish women report their perception that systems are not holding others accountable. Hate crimes are not investigated. Several note they have been warned not to report incidents and threatened with career consequences if they do.



Why This Matters

- Frequent exposure to threats can [lead](#) to serious psychological, emotional and physical effects.⁸
- Antisemitic threats are leaving mothers no longer comfortable sending their children to public schools. Since October 7, 2023, enrollment at Jewish day schools has [surged](#).⁹
- Security costs for Jewish institutions and synagogues have [increased](#)¹⁰ dramatically. Jewish day schools are now spending on average [fifty percent](#)¹¹ more on security measures than before October 7, 2023.

Stories

Persecuted at Home and Online

“Earlier this year, our house was egged on both the front and the side because we had a small flag in the front that said ‘We Support Israel.’”

“I have been in pro-Israel groups on Facebook and have been then sent private messages that are antisemitic, cruel and vile. I have been called names that I would never use to describe another human being.”

“Someone in my home asked me if I know what a good Jew is, then proceeded to say, ‘A good Jew is a dead Jew.’”

Threatened.

Targeted. Harassed.



Bullied at School

“My 12-year-old grandson was told by students at his middle school that he belongs in the ovens. He feels very unsafe there and the principal has not really addressed this issue.”

*“My youngest grandchild, a 15-year-old, proudly Jewish girl, was confronted in her overwhelmingly Christian school cafeteria by a fellow student, who yelled that she was ‘a Jewish f***ster.’ My heart sank when she told me.”*

“Both of my kids faced antisemitism at school. One had pennies thrown at him and was told to go back to the ovens.”

“Our granddaughter, at the time age 11, received a text from a ‘friend’ from school that read ‘From the river to the Sea’ with some anti-Israel slanders.”

“Our grandson at high school found a white board in the school’s common area with ‘death to the Jews’ and ‘death to Israel.’”

Intimidated at Work

“I have experienced antisemitism at the community college where I am a tenured professor. The administration threatened to fire two Jewish faculty members for sharing what they said was ‘fabricated’ antisemitic harassment and threats by other students.”

“I had to quit my tenure position at the college, as I was harassed and punished for speaking up against antisemitic propaganda.”

“I had students draw swastikas on my desk. I feel extremely guilty for remaining anonymous in my community, but my fear of becoming a target is real.”

Tormented in Public

“I was physically attacked at a rally, and my Israeli flag was stolen and burnt in front of me. It has made me uncomfortable attending any similar events.”

“Not too long ago, someone painted a large swastika on the community tennis court grounds. A neighbor called the police, and it was removed. However, the HOA did nothing immediately.”

Threatened.

Targeted. Harassed.



"I noticed a young man scribbling over the pictures of the hostages placed on light poles. I naively thought he was just writing helpful comments, so I politely asked him what he was doing. He began to scream at me 'Genocide, Genocide.'"

"I have been kicked and hit with an umbrella. I've been called a baby killer more times than I can count."

"Awaiting a train on a railroad platform, my family and I, who are identifiably Jewish, were stalked and called murderers by an adult male. We fled from the station."

"Right down the street in our heavily Jewish neighborhood, vandals spray painted the business of a college board member for not agreeing to BDS terms. The graffiti is still not cleaned up."

Threatened in Sacred Spaces

"Our Chabad and Pittsburgh Jewish Federation buildings were graffitied with red paint and Hamas symbols."

"My daughter is a college junior who couldn't attend Passover services on campus due to threats. I've talked to her at two o'clock in the morning, when she calls crying because protesters are defending rape as a justified means of resistance."

"My synagogue had a bomb threat on a Shabbat in December and we had to evacuate."

"We have had defacement of some synagogues, people shouting out at us as we walk to service or between our homes. It is not safe for Jews and especially women."

Concealed.



Jewish Women Reported Feeling Cautious About Revealing Their Identities

Fifty-two percent of survey respondents felt the need to hide their Jewish identity. Fears based on lived experience of being targeted, silenced and isolated have led many Jewish women to hide their identities in public. Women reported concealing their identities at work. They also reported leaving behind symbols of their faith and tucking in their necklaces with Magen David, or Stars of David, inside their clothing to avoid prejudiced treatment in public. In neighborhoods, families that joyfully decorated for Hanukkah now keep menorahs and other objects hidden inside for fear of becoming targets for vandalism.



Why This Matters

- Concealing [leads](#) to lower self-esteem.¹²
- Concealing one's Jewish or Zionist identity leads to a [weakening connection](#) with Judaism and Israel.¹³

Stories

Afraid to Be Identified

"I have become fearful, and I never was before, to let people know I am Jewish."

"I'm afraid to wear my Jewish star in public places."

"I am afraid to wear my Jewish Star necklace and Chai ring out in public. I only wear it to the synagogue, Hadassah and other Jewish events, and on Jewish holidays."

"I stopped wearing anything that might identify me as Jewish and avoided giving my Jewish last name in public."

"I no longer feel safe wearing a Jewish star necklace, especially in downtown Chicago. I feel like a target for those who are anti-Zionists."

"I no longer feel comfortable wearing my kippah after Saturday services. Sometimes I used to forget I had it on but now I always remove it after services."

Concealed.



"I won't wear Jewish jewelry anymore. I don't share my deep Jewish connections and my strong Zionist beliefs with those I don't know."

"I have to think twice about talking about my Judaism, have to feel my way around a conversation about the Middle East to assess if I am speaking with an ally or at least someone open to respectful dialogue."

"I feel unsafe to wear anything that would mark me Jewish. After walking into our supermarket with my Magen David, a man and his daughter watched me shop. It was a spooky feeling."

Concerned with Losing Work

"I am also concerned about how my Jewish identity will affect my business. Because of that, I do not wear a Jewish star or a chai."

"I don't want people outside the Jewish community to know I'm Jewish, as an elected judge."

"A Palestinian supporter refused to work with me on a project when she heard I was planning to visit Israel for a wedding. I refrained from posting my pictures of my visit to Israel for fear of repercussions."

"No one I work with on campus knows I'm Jewish."

Nervous to Display Faith

"I used to display my Hanukkah Menorah in the window, but don't do that anymore."

"I don't put my Hanukkah sign on my front door during the holidays because I am simply afraid."

"I took down my mezuzah on my front door in fear of vandalism to my home."

"I don't exhibit my Judaism in public, such as talking about being Jewish, wearing Jewish jewelry or putting symbols in my window or outside of my house. No menorah in the window. No Hanukkah decorations."

"Since the October 7, 2023 attack, we did not feel comfortable placing decorations for Hanukkah outside of our home, which we have done every year for 30 years."

Resilient.

Women Are Also Standing Up and Fighting Back Against Antisemitism

Even in the face of escalating antisemitism, many Jewish women are determined to not let hate govern their lives. They are standing up to hate. Some are purposefully choosing to wear their Magen David, proudly displaying their mezuzah on their doors or their menorahs in their windows, and flying their Israeli flags. Mothers are teaching their children what it means to be a Jew and a Zionist. Artists are finding new creative ways to express their Jewish identity. Despite feeling scared and worried, women are finding empowerment and resilience.

Why This Matters

- Research shows that resilience, coping with life's ups and downs, overcoming stress and bouncing back from adversity are [vital to success](#).¹⁴
- Without resilience, the stress and burden that societal factors, like rising antisemitism, cause can lead to [significant mental health challenges](#).¹⁵

Stories

"I think a lot about when and where I should wear my Jewish Star; however, I will also sometimes wear it in defiance of what could be uncomfortable situations."

"The more hate I encounter, the more I speak out and the more I wear my star and show my Judaism. I refuse to let hate rule the day."

"It has made my already inward and outward pride of being a Jewish Zionist that much stronger. It has made me try harder than ever to support Jewish-owned businesses."

"I see people and wonder if they would hate me if they knew I was Jewish. On the other hand, I am proudly wearing a small Jewish star around my neck, which I have never done before."

"My initial reaction was to be afraid and hide but I thought about my relatives who were killed in the Holocaust, and it empowered me to become a fighter instead. I'm still afraid but I proudly wear my star, have Israeli and American flags in front of my house, and have a blue porch light on at night to show my support of Israel."

Ready to Act



You Can Stand Up to Antisemitism and Fight Back

Jewish women are feeling isolated, afraid and threatened. They hide their identities from the public, worried that a simple Jewish star around their neck will lead someone to attack them. We can't let this continue. After hearing these stories, we understand you feel compelled to do everything in your power to stand up to antisemitism. Here's how you can join the fight.

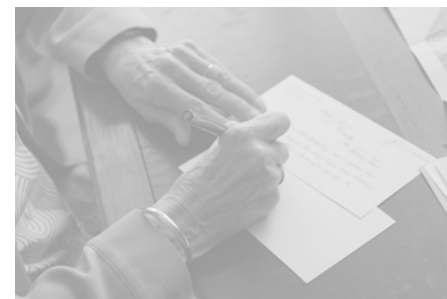
Reading this on paper? You can visit <https://p2a.co/IAADjY2> or scan the QR code above and jump to our action!



↑
Scan Here

Take Action

Write to your members of Congress and call on them to address the unprecedented rise in antisemitism. There is plenty Congress can do — from setting clear definitions for antisemitism, to ensuring civil rights complaints are investigated and prosecuted, to strengthening security funding for synagogues and communities. [Write to your lawmakers today to urge them to advance laws that protect Jewish people from antisemitic hatred.](#)



Speak Out

Hadassah will always stand up to antisemitism and anti-Zionism. As the largest Jewish women's and women's Zionist organization in the US, we provide resources to empower supporters to speak out against antisemitism in everything from personal conversations to local, state and federal policies across the United States. [Read more about ways we are speaking out against antisemitism.](#)



Find Power in Your Community

Support Hadassah and join us to find strength among fellow Jewish women. Hadassah will always work to stand up to antisemitism through empowerment, education and advocacy. [Contribute to Hadassah today and join our efforts to stand up to antisemitism, advocate for change and take pride in your Judaism.](#)



About Hadassah



About Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America:

[Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America](#), is the largest women's Zionist and Jewish women's organization in the United States. Hadassah is a volunteer organization that inspires a passion for and commitment to the land, the people, and the future of Israel. With nearly 300,000 members, donors and supporters across the country and across generations, Hadassah brings advocacy, philanthropy and women's leadership together to make an impact. Hadassah's Education and Advocacy Division empowers women to affect change on critical issues such as ensuring Israel's security, combating antisemitism and promoting women's health. Every day, Hadassah members are speaking out in multiple ways — from sending messages to meeting face to face with elected officials — locally and in Washington. Each of us has the power to make an impact.

Through the Hadassah Medical Organization's (HMO) two hospitals in Jerusalem, Hadassah delivers exemplary patient care to over a million people every year and supports world-renowned medical research. HMO serves without regard to race, religion, or nationality and earned a Nobel Peace Prize Nomination in 2005 for building "bridges to peace." Additionally, Hadassah supports several Youth Aliyah villages that set at-risk children in Israel on the path to a successful future. We are making a difference by bringing healing, justice to the world and putting our Jewish values into action. Visit www.hadassah.org or follow Hadassah on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Threads](#) and [X](#).

Endnotes



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