

Dear Hadassah Friends,

As I begin my second year as Region President, I am honored to represent Hadassah Connecticut.

Hadassah, with over 300,000 members, is the largest volunteer organization in the United States. I was just at the National Assembly meeting in Los Angeles. I thought you'd like to know how many women are involved on the national level. I am one of 33 Region Presidents around the country. The Region Presidents, plus 182 other women, appointed by the National President, form the Portfolio Council. They perform jobs vital to the organization, such as Development, Membership, and PRAZE (Program, Advocacy, Zionism and Education). They are the ones who create programs for our Chapters to use and disseminate information to everyone around the country. In addition, there are 29 members of the elected National Board. These women consider the big picture, debate and vote on finance and policy. Forming a smaller Executive Committee are the 6 National Vice-Presidents, 6 Past National Presidents, and the current National Officers -National President Ellen Hershkin, National Treasurer Shelly Kaplan, National Secretary Gail Hammerman and National Portfolio Officer Frieda Rosenberg. The Executive Committee meets more often, usually at our National Headquarters in New York City. Former members of the National Board form the Honorary Council, women who may be called upon for their collective wisdom. Altogether, these women, and those of the Portfolio Council, meet twice a year as the National Assembly.

I wanted to impress upon you, my Hadassah friends, that virtually every one of these women once sat where you are sitting. Hadassah experience and training enabled them to shoulder the awesome responsibilities of running a multi-national, multi-million dollar organization. So, in 2018, remember how powerful you can be!

We are making our voices heard, supporting a woman's right to choose, fighting against domestic abuse and human trafficking, urging equity in women's medical research and access to preventive healthcare and affordable child care. This year, let's participate in a Day in the District or Day on the Hill activity. I urge you to attend Hadassah's Women's Health and Advocacy Conference in Washington, D.C., May 15-17, 2018. Registration begins this month, so look for information on the Hadassah website. There will be an important panel at the National Press Club, an update from the Israeli Ambassador, and meetings with our legislators on the Hill. A joyful Gala is planned with amazing entertainment. We will begin "Celebration 2018" for Israel's 70th birthday. Advocacy is in our DNA, so let's show it off. We have the power to make changes in our world. Let's use it!

Joyce Backman