Elul is the month leading up to Rosh HaShanah. Each day during the month, a different Temple Beth Torah congregant will share a High Holiday reflection to help us prepare for this season of prayer, repentance and tzedakah.

Belonging
Sandy Cohen

In July of 1956, my family moved from Brooklyn to Huntington, Long Island. I was almost 7 years old, and in September of that year I was going to be in Second Grade. The school I attended did not have too many Jewish students. In fact, every Thursday when the principal announced the early dismissal for religious (not Jewish) instruction, most of my classmates left our class - leaving just a few Jewish kids. In addition, we had to recite the Lord's Prayer every morning. There was a Christmas Tree in every classroom, and school was not cancelled for Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur or Passover. Teachers were even allowed to give tests during the Jewish Holidays, which we could not make up.

For all of those reasons and many more, I always felt at home at Huntington Jewish Center and then later at Temple Beth Torah where being Jewish, acting Jewish, celebrating Jewish and living Jewish were always embraced by me and where I always felt the most comfortable. I always knew that the synagogue was my second home and where I belonged.

My husband, Ira and I, have been members of Temple Beth Torah for over 30 years. Even though we currently reside in Hauppauge, we have maintained our membership here. My children, Jodi and Brian Bezack, along with my grandchildren, Emma and Aidan, reside in Melville and are also members of Temple Beth Torah. My children, Lauren and Seth Cohen, along with my grandchildren, Alex and Maya, reside in Livingston, New Jersey and are currently seeking to join a synagogue there.
Would you like to share your story? It can be a High Holiday memory, a first experience or a ritual that is special to you at this time of year. Send your stories to ravsusie@gmail.com. If you missed any of the previous Elul Stories you can go to www.tbtiny.org (media galleries/elul stories).