



Celebrating the Outstanding Work of our Students

“What My Bat Mitzvah Means to Me”

by Alicia Blum

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To me, being a Bat Mitzvah is a pleasure and a responsibility. It is also about commitment. It took two years to prepare for this - and here it is! I put a great deal of time into preparing for it and then explaining it to everyone who is here. I am proud to be a Bat Mitzvah.

When I was doing the work in preparation for this event, I was thinking to myself, what is the impact of this project? What does it do to my life? Does it change the way I look at things? I found out it does all of those things. Each paper I have written describes something in my life. My family values paper really made me think about what is important to my family and me. As I am reading this paper to you now, I realize that this whole experience is changing my life. It changes the way I think about things.

I learned a lot going to KidSchool - Jewish values, history and culture. I never really thought about Israel, and Jewish life in Israel. Now I do.

Before I started this process I knew very little about my family history. It was fun learning about my father's parents who are with us today. I knew very little about my mom's parents. My grandmother May, died before I was born. My grandpa Max died when I was four years old. Now I see how their lives and their values influenced my parents, which of course influenced me. And it helped me understand why I chose Barak Obama as my role model - we share many of the same ideals and I feel that I share some of the same experiences he had when he was growing up.

My Bat Mitzvah is not the same as my friends' Bar and Bat Mitzvahs. My program is not Hebrew or Torah based. I had the opportunity to explore subjects that really interested me. I learned about different aspects of Jewish thought that I would otherwise not have known about. It made me think about how being Jewish affects our family vacations! There are different ways of celebrating this important milestone, and I hope my Bat Mitzvah was as exciting to you as it was for me.

In our City Congregation community, many people helped me prepare for my Bat Mitzvah. In addition to my parents, who did a lot, I wanted to thank my mentor, Lauren Block, who read every single one of my papers and gave me great suggestions. I also wish thank Isabel Kaplan, the head of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah program, for her input. And of course, Rabbi Peter Schweitzer, who gave me a great deal of guidance on my Jews of Morocco talk. And most of all, I want to thank all of my KidSchool friends who shared the City Congregation experience with me for so many years.