



Celebrating the Outstanding Work of our Students

“What My Bat Mitzvah Means to Me”

by Sabrina Frank

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Throughout my life, my family has taught me about many aspects of Judaism. I have learned about Jewish history, stories, holidays, and foods. Although these aspects of Judaism are important to my feeling Jewish, I feel an even stronger connection to Judaism when I agree with Secular and Humanistic Jewish philosophies. Agreeing with these philosophies has allowed me connect to Judaism in a larger way than counting down the days until Chanukah. I have let these ideas become a part of me, and by doing that I have let myself become a part of Judaism.

When I first started preparing for my bat-mitzvah, although I was excited- it seemed like just another step in my kid school experience. Then, when school work added up with High School and Bat Mitzvah preparation, I found myself being overwhelmed and decided to put my Bat Mitzvah preparation on hold. My parents backed me up on my decision because they understood how stressful this work could be on me.

Last summer, when High school preparation and school was not as intense, I started thinking about where my bat mitzvah was going. Then, in the beginning of this school year, my parents told me it was time to decide whether or not I was going to have a bat mitzvah at all. They told me that it had to be purely my decision but that they would (yet again) back me up no matter what I chose. At this point in time, I understood that having a bat mitzvah was more than a kid school experience. I wanted to have a bat mitzvah to feel more connected to the Jewish community. So with this in mind I chose to have a bat mitzvah, and I am very proud to say that I will be done shortly.

I feel like having this bat mitzvah is the end result of my whole kid school journey and the beginning of a more mature, Jewish, accomplished me. Through preparing for my bat mitzvah I have become smarter about topics that don't even have to do with Judaism. For example, I have learned about global warming, Barbra Streisand and I have even learned more about my family and what I care about in life. I have also become a better writer. In fact, through my bat mitzvah preparation I was introduced to a new way of creating a paper. This method can be explained in one simple sentence: produce as much work as you possibly can- then cut until you have about one half of what you worked so hard to create. I hope I will use what I have learned throughout the rest of my life.

Mom and dad, I am most thankful for all the help you have given me throughout my whole bat mitzvah process. You have supported me and helped me with all my work despite any decision I have made concerning this ceremony.

Mom, from the beginning you have sat with me when I worked- even if you had a billion other tasks to complete. I really appreciate all the time you have spared for me.

Dad, when mom helped I know you were not at rest- you had to make sure everything around the house was getting done how it should be. Not to say you haven't helped me directly though. Closer to the middle and end of my bat mitzvah preparation you helped me get my work organized and finish my papers up.

Wyatt, thank you so much for being supportive to me about my bat mitzvah up until this day.

My kid school teachers, Aram, Leia, Rick, Merna, Rachel and Meira, thank you for sharing your wisdom with me. Without all I have learned at kid school, my bat mitzvah would not come close to being as meaningful or interesting.

Rabbi Peter and Myrna, thank you for making the type of bat mitzvah I am having right now a possibility. Also, thank you for your mentoring help and putting me on the fast track.

Renee, thank you for being a wonderful mentor who shared so much time, energy and good ideas with me. I remember when I decided to put my bat mitzvah preparation on hold and my family told you the news. You asked, “does this mean I am being fired?” We were surprised you could ever come up with such a conclusion. You are a very helpful mentor and I am very glad you waited for me during the time I stopped working towards the completion of my bat mitzvah.

Meira, thank you for helping me develop some ideas for my major project.

Howard, thank you for jumping in towards the end of my bat mitzvah to act as a second mentor to me so I would finish up all my work on time. Your ideas and feedback were very useful and I am so grateful they were available to me.

Aram and Rick, thank you so much for performing the music at my bat mitzvah, you did a great job and you deserve a round of applause.

Julia, thank you for your help with my invitations, RSVPs and thank you cards. You let me tweak your wonderful design and colors choices until I thought there was absolutely nothing else that I could possibly want changed.

And last but not least thank you to all my fans... no, I'm just kidding. Thank you all for being here on this special day. It means a lot to me.