Jewish journal
by Jessica Vachal simchot

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LYDIA KRASNER BRINGS HER JEWISH LOVE TO MITZVAH EVENT PRODUCTIONS

Freshening up the ritual

LYDIA KRASNER LOVES BAR MITZVAHS. SHE LOVES THE SYMBOLISM BEHIND them, the cultural significance of taking a day to celebrate a child's entrance into the adult world of Judaism. She loves the solemnity of them, listening to a child sing Hebrew, the language of the ancestors. Krasner also loves the celebration of bar mitzvahs, the joining together of family and friends in pride and love for the newest young adult in their lives.

This dedicated love stems from the fact that Krasner did not have her own bat mitzvah until she was 21. Her understanding of the ritual is still fresh, she can relate well to these 12- and 13-year-olds working to attain their status of adults within the Jewish community.

"They work so hard, and in seventh grade, they'd rather be socializing, playing baseball, whatever, instead of going to Hebrew (school)," Krasner contends. "There are so many other things for them to do and I really feel for them, because I was working two jobs, going to college, having a bat mitzvah at the same time."

Given her passion, Krasner's chosen profession is not suprising. "Mitzvah Event Productions" is the event planning company Krasner established in 1998 and runs out of her home. Planning fund-raisers and other events on her own since 1995, Krasner decided to take the final step and become a full-time CEO of her own company when she discovered she was pregnant with twins, now both 8 years old.

"It was such a niche in the community," Krasner recalls of her company's start, "because there were a ton of wedding planners, but there were no bar mitzvah planners."

However, Krasner is not exclusive, she says. "I do weddings, I do everything. I do graduations, I do 60th birthday parties, last year I did a bris." The creativity her job allows her is what most appeals to Krasner, who attended Southern California Performing Arts High School and is well-versed in the arenas of theatrical lighting, costume and scenic design.

Undeniably, however, bar and bat mitzvahs will always be her favorite part of her company. "I (can) put that Judaic part with the creative part, and make something that is just so perfect for me."

Taking over the entire party-coordinating process, Krasner takes pride in her attention to detail, as ensuring a cohesive feel for an event depends on them. She delegates nothing, from the decorating theme to catering, location scouting, and lighting design. She or a capable member of her team, is on hand throughout the course of each event to ensure the party runs smoothly from start to finish.

In addition, Krasner makes education a part of her mitzvah event-planning process. "A bar mitzvah is not a civil thing like a wedding, it's a religious coming-of-age. You have to understand why the service happens and what it's all about before you can really execute it with meaning. And so that's what we teach, is the background, the history, what it's all about, why bar mitzvahs are different (from other events)."

A proud member of BESA, of which she is vice president, Krasner also runs the company Charmed Expressions with friend and BESA co-founder Sherrill Kinsler. To reach Lydia Krasner, or to learn more about Mitzvah Event Productions, visit mitzvahevent.com or call (619) 548-3485. ✡