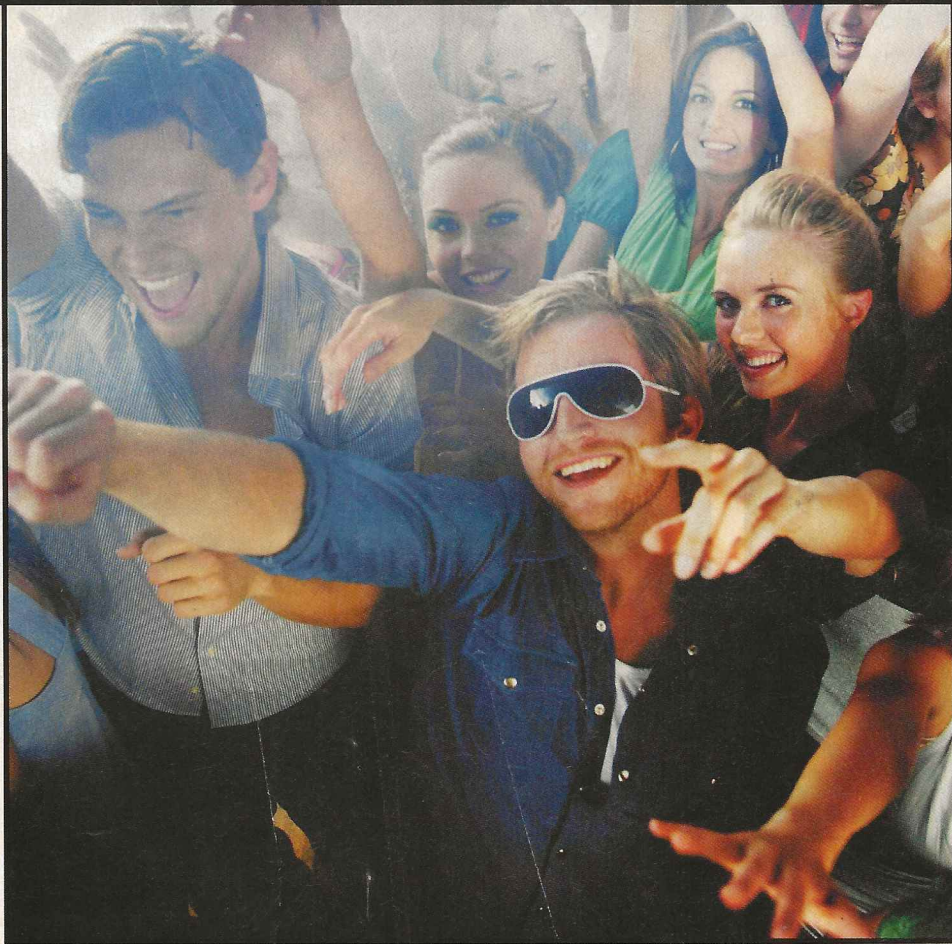


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simcha by jessica durham



THE PARTY NEVER STOPS

Lydia Krasner celebrates 13 years as San Diego's premier Jewish event planner

Lydia Krasner has received some strange requests in her days as a bar and bat mitzvah planner. Llamas. Cross dressers. Live birds. Belly, hula, fire and hip hop dancers. A mechanical bull. A drill sergeant. A hypnotist. A psychic. But not once has she declined to follow through (within reason, of course).

In her 13 years as a San Diego-based event planner, Krasner has seen it all and done it all when it comes to Jewish events. Though she plans weddings, birthday parties and just about any celebration a client can request, she spends the bulk of her time making kids' bar and bat mitzvahs unlike anything their parents remember from their own, planning about 35 of the parties each year.

Krasner said she believes what makes the parties she plans so fun and successful is that

"Theme parties are a blast. A lot of the time it's just having your eyes open and looking at everything. If I have a theme in my head, I'm just constantly just looking around and shopping," she said. "You should see my storage. It's ridiculous."

Krasner's clients have requested themes that run the gamut. And after 13 years, she can turn just about any idea or concept into a full-blown party theme. Dreamgirls, candy, travel, bright colors, gym shoes, games, military and shopping ideas all have become the basis for some of Krasner's most elaborate and beautiful parties.

Despite the excitement of creating new, exciting party ideas, Krasner is still a firm supporter of the traditions that come with bar and bat mitzvahs.

between trend and tradition," she said. "I'm all about the tradition, but a lot of the kids are into what the trends are these days. It's a fine line and I think if we can find a balance, it's a successful party."

Krasner has linked Jewish traditions of the past with trends of today by bringing in comedic, but authentic, bottle dancers and recording and singing two parents' rewritten version of "Sabbath Prayer" from *Fiddler on the Roof* for their son.

As hospitality vice president of BESA (Bar/Bat Mitzvah Event Services Association), owner of Mitzvah Event Productions and co-owner of Charming Expressions, a company that provides activities and favors for bar and bat mitzvahs, Krasner keeps herself busy by hosting periodic mitzvah mingles at hotels, where vendors who are members of BESA make themselves available to answer questions and offer advice to members of the community, clients and potential clients.

Krasner also considers herself the queen recruiter of BESA, which has grown from about 32 members to more than 60 in the past year alone.

As such a seasoned professional in the bar and bat mitzvah business, Krasner has learned a thing or two about running a party smoothly and keeping it fun.

"It's all about the execution and the installation," she said. "It's also all about continuity; making it look like it goes together. You've got to have consistency from the linen colors to the balloons. Something's got to be the same at every table."

One of the most important decisions parents can make, however, when beginning to plan their child's bar or bat mitzvah, Krasner said, is to hire an event planner.

"A lot of people think it's a luxury," she said of planners. It's really a necessity, and sometimes people don't realize that until after the fact. "People come to me and they say, 'What's the *challah* all about? And after teaching 18 years of religious school, I help people with the ritual consultation, too. So it's a very well rounded position to be in. I really bring it all together for them, and I have some people who come out of it and they go, 'Oh my God, I could have never done that.' It's such a tremendous service." ☆

• To learn more about Lydia Krasner and her services, visit mitzvahevent.com/eventplanner.html