

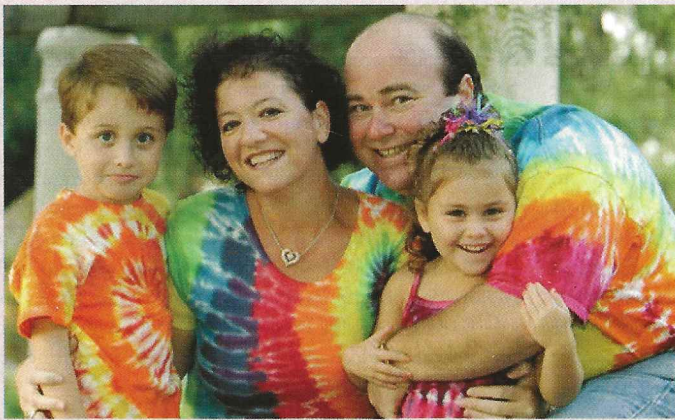
# TURNING THE MITZVAH TABLES!

By Lydia Krasner

I can plan a Bar Mitzvah with my eyes closed. But now the tables are turned. My twins are turning 13 and their event is right around the corner. My eyes are wide open seeing things from a whole different perspective!

Thirteen years ago I gave birth to beautiful twins. I knew one day I would be lucky enough to plan their mitzvah but I never imagined how fast the time would fly. Now it's time to create the memories for our family, our own mitzvah. Seeing this process from a parents' perspective has really given me a new outlook.

I execute between 30 and 40 Bar and Bat Mitzvot each year for other families. I have always believed it was a privilege to be chosen as the planner to organize such a monumental family occasion. I often feel as though I become part of the family, at least for a short period of time. As each mitzvah day draws nearer, there is no doubt I am on each of my clients' speed dial! At the end of each event I look back on the planning, and I feel blessed to have made each event special for the family and know they felt special too. Another client well served.



But now, as a parent, having my own event, I am the client. I am emotionally involved. I am now presented with all the options for invitations, entertainment, breathtaking centerpieces, beautiful venues, linens, games, DJ's, and the list goes on! These are all the things that I tell my clients make each event personalized and unique. Now that it's our turn, I see how difficult it is to make selections. Now that the tables are turned, I am seeing these events from a whole new perspective. Instead of standing in the wings, I am now standing center stage. I am my own client.

I'm fairly certain that on the day of our B'nai Mitzvah, my staff will have to hold me back from picking up dirty glasses, making sure the centerpieces are straight and checking in with all the vendors. It's just what I do! However, I vow to leave all the details up to them so I can be emotionally present for my family. This is the one gift I give every client, and I can't wait to experience that feeling myself. If someone else is shvitzing over the details, you are able to focus on your family and guests.

I have a few pet peeves, one of them is appetizers served on a stick or a bone. Don't get me wrong, they are usually delicious. Here's the problem...your guests are never quite sure what to do with the remnants when they are finished. They usually end up on cocktail tables. Unfortunately, I probably know too much after doing that many Bar and Bat Mitzvot

over the past 16 years. Here's what I know: when you have a room filled with 13 year olds, tootsie rolls inevitably end up in the punchbowl and skittles are shot from straws. For my event, I promise to leave all the pet peeves up to my staff. As I always say, "love is in the details!"



PHOTOS BY DEL RIO STUDIOS

I have recently learned that there is a huge buzz around my upcoming event. Everyone wants to know "what is Lydia going to do for HER OWN kids?" I'm certain people are expecting elaborate centerpieces, a performance by the New York Philharmonic, and maybe even dancing rabbi's. What people don't know is that for me, it is so much more about the meaning. It's always about the meaning. I have run the gamut of events fulfilling my client's wishes. I've had requests for cross dressers, belly dancers and llamas. But the real essence of the Bar and Bat Mitzvah is seeing your child raised up in the chair above the congregation rejoicing in his or her accomplishments. It's about dancing the hora, and it's about family.

As a youngster, I never became a Bat Mitzvah. Back then, my Father's side was orthodox and didn't believe in girls going to Hebrew school. Although we kept kosher and went to Synagogue, I did not have this wonderful opportunity. I gave this gift to myself as an adult. When I turned 19, I joined a Temple, studied for two years, I learned the Torah, and became a B'nai Mitzvah at age 21. This is where my passion is derived. The meaning of this B'nai Mitzvah for my children goes very deep within my heart. In September 2009, we were given our twins B'nai Mitzvah date of November 17, 2012. On November 17, 2009, my Father passed away from Sarcoidosis, which is a crippling lung disease. Originally, we chose their date because the Torah portion speaks of passing the Torah to the generations. After I lost my Father, we decided it was b'shert to keep the original date even though it is my Father's Yartzeit. Our children have chosen to dedicate their B'nai Mitzvah to my Father. Our son Noah will wear my Dad's tallis. One of their Mitzvah projects is to raise awareness for Sarcoidosis. The kids had reusable grocery bags printed with websites for two charities, and are selling them and donating the profits to the organizations for research and a cure.

So now it's my turn! Bring on the waterproof mascara! Knowing that these were my Father's only Jewish grandchildren, he would have kvelled to see them become B'nai Mitzvah. This is a day my husband Ron and I have been looking forward to for 13 years, and will cherish forever. I am in your shoes!

Every Saturday, I am the party planner, wine steward, waiter, janitor, busboy, police officer, and clean-up crew.... But now I am just looking forward to being the "Mitzvah Mom".

For more information about Lydia Krasner and Mitzvah Event Productions, go to [www.mitzvaevent.com](http://www.mitzvaevent.com)