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Lev Lalev's
SPOTLIGHT



Thanking Those Who Make a Difference

August 2008

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Lev LaLev Backpacks

Mitzvah Girls at Work

It was a day of brisk sales at the Jewish Community Center-Rockland Teen Mitzvah Day when Brooke Cowen and her friend Stephanie Levy, who were part of a group, manned a booth at the fair selling stylish black backpacks emblazoned with the attractive Lev LaLev logo.



Brooke Cowen (L) and Stephanie Levy (R) sold these beautiful Lev LaLev custom-made backpacks.

It all began when JCC's Kathie Izen, "Mitzvah Makers" project director, showed Brooke Cowen a video of our dear girls at the Rubin-Zeffren Children's Home in Netanya. In a flash, Brooke, along with her friend and partner, Stephanie Levy decided to undertake a fundraising project in honor of their Bat Mitzvahs that would benefit our girls. The girls' mothers, Wendy Cowen-Smith and Debi Levy were thrilled at their daughters' choice.

Brooke thought about possibilities for the fundraiser and came up with the idea of selling backpacks printed with the organization's logo. She did a bit of research and found a company who specialized in logo products. Wendy and Debi financed their daughters' venture and the girls were 'in business.'

Most of the 50 backpacks the girls ordered were sold at the JCC-Rockland's Teen Mitzvah Day while the rest were sold at their synagogue, the Orangetown Jewish Center in Orangetown, NY.

Three Individual Mitzvah Project Causes **Israel ~ Local ~ Global**

Besides her one-month Lev LaLev backpack sales campaign, Brooke also had a mitzvah project activity at her May 31st Bat Mitzvah party, which benefited the Rockland County Family Shelter. Brooke and her friends filled "Good Night" baskets, which would be distributed to needy people in her local community. The baskets included toothbrushes, washcloths, soap, diapers and blowing bubbles. Another party activity, which benefited the girls at our Home, was assembling stuffed animals, which were then shipped to Israel. Our Director of Development, Chaya Feuerman

told Wendy Cowen that each time a new girl comes to the Home, they receive a stuffed animal as part of their welcoming gifts. This fact touched Wendy and Brooke so much that they took on this additional project on as well. Each stuffed animal made at the party had a ribbon around its' neck and a little sign saying, "Made with Love at Brooke's



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Bat Mitzvah.”

Brooke’s “global project”, suggested by her synagogue’s assistant Rabbi, was a “Back-to-School” supply packet for the orphaned children at Rwanda’s Agahozo Shalom Youth Village. Brooke shopped for and gathered notebooks, folders, pens and pencils for these underprivileged kids in Africa who are getting a chance to succeed through this facility’s help, whose name means ‘dry their tears - agahozo’ and the Hebrew word ‘shalom - to live in peace.’

Brooke and Stephanie’s friendship and their dedication to making a mitzvah count where it’s really needed are very inspiring. Brooke, who is almost 13, tells us, “When I learned that the girls needed help, I wanted to help them!” About to enter the eighth grade at the Reuben Gittelman Hebrew Day School, Brooke hopes to visit Israel next February for her senior trip. Wendy already spoke to the school’s trip coordinator and the possibility of a visit to the Rubin-Zeffren Children’s Home is a strong choice for a visit.

Stephanie Levy attends the Nanuet Middle School. She says, “It felt good to be helpful towards the girls. I am happy I was able to help!” Stephanie adds that she would definitely like to travel to Israel someday in the future and especially would include a visit to the Children’s Home.

Brooke Cowen lost her father Bruce, z”l, when she was only six. He passed away as a result of a heart attack two weeks before 9/11. He was an active community-minded individual and was about to begin his presidency of the Orangetown Jewish Center in New City, NY when he passed away. Today, a chapel in the synagogue is named after him. And, it is evident that his daughter Brooke follows in his footsteps as she is very sensitive to her own community’s needs, has exhibited concern for our special girls in Israel and for the orphans in Africa. May all her mitzvot be a blessing to her dear departed father’s memory.

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