

heaved with her deep, noisy breathing. Then, tilting her head slightly in our direction but still staring out at the water, she intoned in a slow and thick voice, "Nice

Sure, I've been doing this every week for a couple of months already," she answered. "For *chesed*."

You learn something new every day. I try to remem-

For comments or questions you may feel free to e-mail the author at Iwtbaslp@yahoo.com.

We Will Always Remember ..➤

By Daniel and Lauren Deitch
Hidden Hills, California

I am currently an eighth grader at A.E. Wright Middle School in California. My bar mitzvah was on December 9, 2006 and I shared it with my sister.

Hello, I am a seventh grader at the same school as my brother. For our Bnai Mitzvah project we wrote a book about how our grandparents survived the Holocaust. Our grandfather is from Germany and our grandmother was from Hungary.

It all started when our temple required that we perform a mitzvah project. Honestly, we were so busy with school, scouting and sports that we really weren't into the idea. So we decided to collect books for BookEnds, an organization that organizes book drives to recycle children's books to create libraries for children in schools, hospitals and youth organizations. We planned to ask our family and friends to bring books to our Bnai Mitzvah because we knew it was a good cause, but also that it would be a pretty easy project for us.

Then, at the end of June of 2006, our grandmother Julie passed away. During her *shiva*, our parents showed the videotape of her interview with the Shoah Foundation. We started to ask many questions about her life in Hungary, and how she survived the Holocaust when the Nazis murdered her family. That's when we came up with the idea of writing a book and distribute it at our Bnai Mitzvah. Since grandmother promised to be at our Bnai Mitzvah, we felt that, in a way, this would have her be with us. Although the book is a dedication to her, we decided to include our grandfather's fascinating story. He was part of the Kindertransport, which saved his life, while his parents had to escape to Shanghai, China in order to survive.

As part of our research for the book, our parents brought us to the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles.

This experience truly moved us. It was then that we felt how important it was for us to contribute our story to help people not forget that over 11 million people were killed during the Holocaust because of intolerance. This visit challenged us to explore the meaning of tolerance and to look for a way to help people learn to take responsibility for their actions. We believe that only then would people be able to live with people of different races, religions and beliefs in peace. We feel that our book can make an impact on kids our age and maybe even their parents. People need to remember what happened in World War II. At our school, it seems that only about half the kids know about the Holocaust. Since we have written this book, we have gotten people at our school to start talking about the Holocaust.

At our Bnai Mitzvah, our rabbi introduced our book to our family, friends and congregation. Because nobody except our parents knew about the book, it was a huge surprise to everybody. As an extra bonus, people donated their used books to the BookEnds project, too.

For an ongoing way to honor our grandparents, we came up with the idea of giving our profits of the sale of our book to The Blue Card Fund, a national charity that provides financial assistance to needy Jewish survivors of Nazi persecution. What a nice surprise it was to have people send us checks made out directly to the Fund. We also hope that our book will bring much needed attention to this worthy charitable organization. ■

This essay was the first prizewinner of the Areyvut Bnai Mitzvah Essay Contest. Each essay contest winner has his/her essay posted on the Areyvut web site, www.areyvut.org, is invited to speak about their projects to other students and receives various prizes including an iPod, a Giving Certificate to be redeemed at Tzedakah, Inc., The Jewish Publication Society and Judaica Press. Areyvut will begin accepting submissions for their fourth annual contest in the summer. Areyvut helps Jewish day schools and congregational schools to create new and meaningful tikkun olam programs for their students. Check out their website for details at www.areyvut.org.

LIFE

by Devorah Leah Seliger at age 14

A mound of gold
A radiant light
A shining soul
Reflecting so bright

A potential within
Wishing to be expressed
A boundless ability
So often repressed

Hashem sends down a soul
And blocks her vision
Blind in a world she does not know
Makes a senseless decision

Lost in a new dimension
Everything becomes a sensation
All spiritual pleasure that forever do last
Are now nothing but a thing of the past

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