

Bat mitzvah by design

A unique artful experience

JEANETTE FRIEDMAN

Seventeen years ago, Sheryl Intrator of Engelwood, a history major who loved art, created Jewish baby-naming certificates and sold them around the country. But then it was time for a change. She noticed that the arts were lacking in her daughters' lives, so she organized after-school art programs for them and their friends, and at the Cloister Art Studios in Englewood.

Intrator did everything but teach classes at the now-defunct studios to make the program work.

But then disaster struck.

The assigned teacher quit after the first day, and that changed Intrator's life forever. Her friend, a special education teacher, suggested Intrator teach the course herself, and with her help and lots of books and lectures, she took it on. Then, wanting to provide her daughter with a summer experience,

try. Back then, the parents of preteen daughters began to clamor for fashion classes for their "wannabe" designers. Intrator decided to explore the fashion and design world and developed fashion programs using her time-tested formula of learning, creating projects, and taking field trips from her art programs.

The summer fashion bat mitzvah program is a five-day-a-week experience, with two trips to the garment center per week. Daughters and friends have a ball while getting an insider's view of how the fashion industry really works, from the bolt of fabric to the retail rack in a boutique department store, from accessories to make-up. In other words, the girls learn fashion from head to toe. The real bonus: they design and make their own bat mitzvah dresses.

"The garment industry has been very generous to me and my students," Intrator said. "If the girls want to be fashion designers, they get to meet them and find out that there is much more to the fashion industry than design. They meet merchandisers, marketing people, and human resources representatives. Our special all-day programs are designed with representatives from Ralph Lauren, Guess Jeans, Mudd, DKNY, Tommy Hilfiger, Juicy Couture, The Gap, Abercrombie and Fitch and so many others.

"They also get to see the editorial side of the business by visiting Teen Vogue and Seventeen," Intrator said. "They can learn about the fragrance industry, and get to meet Noses, the people who design scents; the bottle makers, and marketers."

Students also get to attend lectures at the Fashion Institute of Technology, to design shoes with Steve Madden, visit museums, go backstage to see the costume collections at Broadway shows, and speak with wardrobe supervisors. They've been to "Mary Poppins," "Beauty and the Beast," and other major shows. There are even courses in the toy business that teach about Build-a-Bear, Barbie, and American Girl. There are also jewelry courses, with visits to Tiffany's and the Gemological Institute.

"My own daughters were my inspiration. I started with Arielle, who turns 22 this week, and her older sister, Jordana, who really inspired me with the fashion classes. She is an intern at Seventeen and wants a career in the industry," said Intrator. "Thanks to them, I really love to teach my classes and I can see the happiness in the children after just one week of their special experience. It is so different and so rewarding!"

For more information visit or call Intrator at (201) 503-9796.

"If the girls want to be fashion designers, they get to meet them and find out that there is much more to the fashion industry than design. They meet merchandisers, marketing people."

she melded history and iconography to create a series of art programs that grew and grew and are now available to anyone who wants it — from fourth-graders to senior citizens, in classes that are age-appropriate and range from the classics and Impressionists to fashion trends.

Intrator teaches seven courses on demand in classic art history, but with a twist. Her students get to see paintings in museums around New York and New Jersey and learn to understand why the paintings were made, how they were made, and in what social context they were made. She also explains the importance of art in political history. The course is so effective, students go back to school eager to learn — so much so, their grades improve. And in addition to all the seeing and thinking they do, the students also get to create their own works of art.

About ten years ago, Intrator developed the perfect bat mitzvah girl fashion program to fulfill all the imaginings a teen might have about the indus-

If you can't celebrate here...



Celebrate
at the
Jewish Center of Teaneck

Two beautiful ballrooms for both large and small parties - From Brit Milah to Chupah, we have the right space for you

Magnificent Orthodox sanctuary for your ceremony

Serviced by the area's finest Kosher caterers

Call Lynn today!

201.833.0515 ext. 203



Jewish Center of Teaneck
70 Sterling Place, Teaneck, NJ

Conveniently located just 3 miles west of the GW bridge.