

20th Annual *Bar & Bat Mitzvah* Planning Guide

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Texting takes teen from palm to party

By DIANA GERSHMAN
Jewish Press

These days, technology is like a member of the family so it's not surprising that at least one Bat Mitzvah girl decided to base her party on her beloved cell phone. OMG!

"At first, I thought it would be a joke. I was actually texting at the time and then my thought was it would be a great idea," said Jori Neuman, the Bat Mitzvah.

Jori, the daughter of Rod and Jill Neuman of Tampa, celebrated her Bat Mitzvah last November at Congregation Schaarai Zedek in Tampa. The cell phone themed party was held at a downtown Tampa hotel Saturday evening for over 250.

Guests were ushered to their tables by picking up nametag smiley face cookies, each with an abbreviated text such as "LOL," which corresponded to shorthand text messages on the "screens" of the centerpieces made to look like cell phones. For example, Rod and Jill Neuman's coworkers were seated at the table called "DADZ PEEPS."

The family also borrowed from the business world for some of the decorations. Suspended from the ceiling, a sign read, "JMobile," a mesh of the Bat Mitzvah's name with cell phone company, TMobile and there were balloons shaped like people, similar to the ones from the Alltel commercials.

"My friends thought it was really funny because they know I love my phone and they know I love texting," said Jori. She admits she goes a little overboard with texting on her cell phone, and messages her friends any hour of the day.

The Neuman family used a party planner and the hotel's caterer for the event. Jori said that the highlight of her Bat Mitzvah party was seeing the adults and teenagers celebrating together.

Despite the obvious light side of the theme, there was also a serious side. The Neumans are longtime supporters of The Spring of Tampa Bay, an organization aimed at preventing domestic violence and sheltering victims. For her Bat Mitzvah project, Jori



Jori Neuman strikes a pose in front of a sign at her cellphone texting themed party. BFF is texting lingo for Best Friend Forever.



The table names in text lingo and their definitions for the uninitiated.



Photo by MADDOCK PHOTOGRAPHERS

Linda Falk Howard prepares to add her thoughts to Jori Neuman's sign-in board.

collected used cell phones from her guests, and donated them to The Spring. The group distributes used phones to victims of domestic violence who are in need of some form of communication tool, especially in emergencies.

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