

## **UJEB Bat Mitzvah Program Testimonials**

*"We have been so happy with the way the UJEB Bat Mitzvah program has been run over Zoom, engaging the girls and enabling them to continue to learn throughout COVID. A great job by everyone who worked to keep the momentum going for the girls. And after yesterday's session I have one who is keen to give Krav Maga a try, and even wants me to go along! Thank you."*

**Liana Freeman, mother of twin 2020 Bat Mitzvah participants**

*"Thank-you for having our daughter in the UJEB Bat Mitzvah program this year. We are very appreciative that you were able to accommodate her after we were late in our application. We were also really pleased with how the program handled the Coronavirus lockdowns. The program transitioned to Zoom in a seamless fashion and the girls even managed to make cheesecake for Shavuot! Both teachers this year (Michelle and Rivka) were lovely and very engaging. Michelle made our daughter feel very welcome when she didn't know the other girls in her group, and she really connected with Rivka's teaching style. Our daughter felt supported in her UJEB journey throughout the entire year and also really enjoyed the change in focus each term. Overall, we are grateful to UJEB for providing such a community based program."*

**Romi Zaslavsky, mother of 2020 Bat Mitzvah participant**

*"On reflection over the past year, we are blessed and privileged to have witnessed our daughter's growth through her Batmi journey with UJEB. The program has afforded both her, and us as a family, the blessing of learning about our own individual and family history and roots. We have also witnessed her growth in terms of yiddishkeit, tzedakah and maturing into the kind, considerate and mindful young Jewess she is today. Thank you UJEB for facilitating a program of maturity, connection and growth, and setting the pathway for our daughter's journey to becoming Bat Mitzvah."*

**Lisa Myers, mother of 2020 Bat Mitzvah participant**

*"The UJEB Bat Mitzvah program has managed the COVID situation really well. The classes continued to run online and, whilst they may not have been exactly as planned, the girls have certainly had access to some incredibly moving content. They stood (all be it via Zoom) in St Kilda Shule while Rabbi Glasman blew the shofar. They attended an incredibly moving session with a Holocaust survivor. They made apple swans for Rosh Hashana. They even had a session with a member of the Israeli Defense Force. So, whilst they lost some of their original opportunities, they gained other new ones that they otherwise would not have had."*

*Whilst most kids' activities ceased for the lockdown period, leaving the kids with nothing to break up the repetitive routine of lockdown, UJEB Bat Mitzvah classes kept running, giving the kids the opportunity to socialize and connect with other like-minded souls."*

*Most notably, their teacher Rivka is an incredible teacher and UJEB is lucky to have her. She radiates positivity and kindness. The students love her and feel incredibly comfortable with her. She generates engaging discussion and challenges the students on all levels. I cannot fault the UJEB Bat Mitzvah program and the way it has run throughout the entire COVID period."*

**Jodie Fox, mother of 2020 Bat Mitzvah participant**

*"I like the fact that the program spans throughout the whole year and works in coordination with other Jewish organizations. My daughter had the opportunity to explore content she otherwise wouldn't encounter at school or at any other program."*

**Nurit Meltzer, mother of 3 UJEB Bat Mitzvah graduates, 2014, 2018 & 2020**

*“UJEB’s Bat Mitzvah program is exciting, engaging and inspirational. The program offers many hands-on activities, along with learning about Jewish identity. The program is expertly designed and explores a range of Jewish thoughts and ideas. It is open to all Jewish levels and fosters long term friendships and connections. As an educator, one of my highlights was seeing the enjoyment in the girls’ eyes when they participated in the lessons. I have loved being a part of this journey with these special girls and helping them strengthen their Jewish connection. I feel confident my journey with them has not ended here and our friendship will continue for years to come! I highly recommend this program and I’m proud to be a part of UJEB.”*

**Rivka Luftig, UJEB Bat Mitzvah Teacher 2020**

*“A wonderful program with a great mix of education and fun that gave our daughter a deeper understanding of her Jewish heritage and connections with other Jewish girls.”*

**Kerina Alter, Mother of 2019 Bat Mitzvah graduate**

*“I would highly recommend the UJEB Bat Mitzvah program. It’s warm, educational and inspiring. It shows the children that there is more than one way to be Jewish and allows for everyone to feel proud of their Jewish heritage. A wonderful program for all!”*

**Amelia Kalifa, mother of 2019 Bat Mitzvah graduate**

*“The program was perfect for our family, covering so many different aspects. It helped our daughter develop a stronger connection to her faith and an understanding of where she has come from, while providing the opportunity to form strong bonds with other Jewish girls. She also prepared a ‘Roots Project’, something I felt she would otherwise have missed out on. The program leader couldn’t have been more kind, considerate, engaging and fun. I can highly recommend the program and believe Cara would happily do it all over again.”*

**Melinda Tassone, mother of 2018 Bat Mitzvah graduate**

*“It was an incredibly inclusive and enriching program. Not only did our daughter gain a greater appreciation of her Jewish culture and heritage, she also widened her awareness and understanding of cultural diversity and social justice.”*

**Kim Elisha, mother of 2018 Bat Mitzvah graduate**

*“Iliya did her Bat Mitzvah with UJEB in 2017, and loved it! We all loved sharing her journey through the year with Elke as her teacher, and a very lovely group of girls too.*

*During the first term she got to consider the communities in Melbourne and the wider world that are struggling, while at the same time being enriched by visiting Dandenong market and hearing a new migrant's story. Delving into her family history for the Roots project was deeply meaningful for her, and she spent a lot of time putting it all together, and making a precious album she'll always keep, and that many others have enjoyed looking at as well! She loved meeting a diverse group of women while spending time at the NCJWA too. This term added a more personal and tangible dimension to the year, as they heard from women about the journey of their life and Jewish identity.*

*Overall, she had really regular opportunities to think about her Jewish heritage, her amazing and diverse community, have fun, and learn and grow. So it was a significant and well-rounded experience! The shared ceremony at the end of the year was joyful, special, and lovely to share with all the girls' families. I loved hearing all their thoughtful speeches. Seeing Ily in front of everyone sharing her reflections on the year and her Dvar Torah was heart-warming and deeply special for our whole family. Thanks UJEB! I'll send my son along to your program when he's in Grade 6!”*

**Andy Mia Kranz, mother of 2017 Bat Mitzvah graduate**

*"I had to choose a Batmi program for my two girls, one year after the next. I did my research and chose UJEB. The variety and diversity of the program suited Dara, Jamie and our family. They both loved visiting new places each month and the topics were so engaging. Their teacher made the whole experience even better. She was so kind and understanding and by the end of the year the girls had formed terrific bonds. The final ceremony was perfect, giving each girl a chance to shine. What an amazing opportunity my girls had. We are so lucky to have a Batmi program like this in our community."*

**Mish Arndt, mother of 2 Bat Mitzvah graduates, 2016 & 2017**

*"Sienna graduated from this program with some wonderful new Jewish friends. She has also developed a stronger social and moral compass and now has a deeper understanding of our family history and Jewish life. With all this knowledge I am certain she will become a conscious, confident and courageous young Jewish woman. We are so grateful to UJEB for providing Sienna with this wonderful experience."*

**Nicole Brittain, mother of 2016 Bat Mitzvah graduate**

*"Thank you for creating such a wonderful Bat Mitzvah program! I looked around at other programs but UJEB's program appealed to my daughter and I because of its structure: The social justice section, female Jewish role models, the family roots project and the reading of the Parsha. The social justice term was a great introduction and addition to the program, as it looked at the different communities we are part of and, living in a multicultural country, we found that essential. My daughter really enjoyed the different perspectives of Jewish women who came to chat to the girls, the opportunity to explore her own family history, and the chance to read and reflect on the parsha.*

*She looked forward to joining her group of girls in the weekly classes, and got along well with them, not having known anyone at the start. She enjoyed getting to know other Jewish girls from different schools, one with whom she is still close friends with, 4 years on. She enjoyed all the activities and still recounts experiences from her Bat Mitzvah program days.*

*The afternoon tea, at the closure of the program, was very special as each girl delivered a short speech encompassing their experience and learnings and joined in a hora, experiencing the traditional way to celebrate a simcha. The focus was on the girls, their learning and being part of a community. We are so glad she had the opportunity to be part of such an enriching program - thanks UJEB!"*

**Miru Iser-Lau, mother of 2016 Bat Mitzvah graduate**

*"Thank you so much for creating such an excellent program and for teaching Zara and Asha things they would never have otherwise had the opportunity to learn. For teaching them pride to be a Jewish woman. Thank you for conducting (in front and behind the scenes) such a warm, smooth-running, joyous, heartfelt and unpretentious ceremony and simcha."*

**Michelle Eisen, mother of 2 Bat Mitzvah graduates, 2015 & 2016**

*"What a beautiful ceremony. I was really proud of Maya and very impressed with all the girls. Maya had a lovely year which has sustained her interest. She told me she would recommend this program to future participants."*

**Helen Freeman, mother of 2015 Bat Mitzvah graduate**

*"The program offered our daughter a positive insight into the Jewish community spirit and introduced her to her own family stories and history. With a small group, she interacted each week with girls from different schools. Our daughter has had a truly enriching experience."*

**Leonie Wittner-Ermer, mother of 2014 UJEB Bat Mitzvah graduate**