

# Good Deeds, Indeed

An inspiring look at celebrants' mitzvah projects.

By Melissa Jacobs

Look at what two other 12-year-olds did.

Emmy and Julie are the daughters of Mindy Cohen, who was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 40. The girls were in fourth grade at the time.

Emmy says, "Chemo and radiation were awful for Mom. It was very scary for us. We felt like there wasn't anything we could do to fight the cancer. But our family and friends, and the synagogue, supported Mom. And us. To know that people cared about us was a great feeling."

It was a feeling they wanted to pass to other moms battling cancer.

When it came time for their B'nai Mitzvah at Beth Sholom in Elkins Park, the sisters decided

that their mitzvah project would help a group which had helped their mother. That group is Sharsheret, and its mission is to support young, Jewish women battling breast cancer. One of Sharsheret's programs is Best Face Forward, which assists women with the cosmetic effects of chemotherapy and radiation. From donated items, Sharsheret creates goody bags and ships them to women across the country. Women like

Mindy Cohen, the girls' mother.

And so, it was to Sharsheret's Best Face Forward program that the Cohen twins dedicated their efforts. A full year before their B'nai Mitzvah, the sisters launched a cosmetics drive, gathering donations for Best Face Forward. They wrote letters, manned tables at synagogue events, inspired the assistance of Beth Sholom's Sisterhood, and enlisted the help of family friends who worked for Avon and Cover Girl. The result?

The Cohen girls gathered six enormous boxes of donated cosmetics. Just before their B'nai Mitzvah on October 19, 2008, Emmy and Julie Cohen—and mom Mindy, now a proud survivor—drove the donations to Sharsheret headquarters in Teaneck, N.J. Director Elana Silber was amazed at the girls' dedication. "They helped us spread the word about Sharsheret. The work they did could help save lives. That's the ultimate mitzvah."



Emmy & Julie Cohen