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Parshat Naso

Shabbat Shalom.

Thank you all for being here today. I am excited that you were able to witness me moving to a higher step or position within the Jewish Congregation. Today as I now enter the Jewish religion as a young woman.

The meaning of a bat mitzvah to me is to signify the beginning of religious responsibilities and acceptance into the Jewish adult community.

One of the requirements of becoming a bat mitzvah in our synagogue was to do a Mitzvah Project which means doing a positive act or service to an organization in need. I have always had a love for animals and have decided to contribute my time and dedication towards the Canine Partners For Life Organization.

Canine Partners For Life is a local non-profit organization which trains dogs to assist individuals who have a wide range of physical disabilities. These can be things such as

difficulty using their hand, arms, balance disorders, and people with seizure disorders.

I had the opportunity to visit the Canine For Partners Complex.

I was able to tour the complex and learn the training process which takes about two years.

In the first year dogs are trained in a puppy home by families or in prisons by inmates. The second year of training is at the complex which is located in Cochranville, Pa. Professional trainers work with the dogs.

Dogs are matched with individuals with disabilities and training is designed to meet the specific needs of their human partner.

In order to support the organization, I created flyers to inform others about Canine Partners For Life. I listed several items that could help benefit the program. I placed the flyers in mailboxes in different neighborhoods and asked for donations. At my school, teachers donate money to wear jeans on Fridays. One week, my organization was selected. The money raised was donated to Canine Partners For Life.

Doing mitzvot, and engaging in positive work does not end with Bat Mitzvah. It is a life long commitment as a Jewish person.

As part of my ongoing commitment to supporting peace and justice, I will be offering support to the West Chester Police Department to aid the comfort and nourishment for the officers who are on duty, and who protect our communities, even when we are enjoying our vacations and free time.

My Dad took a few days off from the Police Department helping with all the final

preparations. I guess he was missing work yesterday when he accidentally maced me as I was leaving for breakfast.

We learn in the Torah and in the Jewish writings that follow that we have to care for animals around us and treat them well. We also know it is an important Jewish Mitzvah to care for people in our world. Every person is created by God and so we should help people live the best lives they can.

My parsha is Naso from the book of Numbers chapters 4 to 7. Naso means to “lift up”. It is the

Hebrew word with which God tell Moses to
'take count' or Census of the people of Israel.

Naso is the longest portion in the torah, having
176 verses. In my parsha God tells Moses to
teach Aaron a special three-fold blessing to use
when he blesses the people of Israel. These
priestly blessings occur in this Torah portion.

These blessings are reminders of the past rituals.

The use of this blessing today differs among the
various branches of Judaism.

These blessings are recited in all parts of Israel every Shabbat, on the High Holy Days and all important Jewish life cycle ceremonies.

As Jews pray through out the world on the eve of Shabbat, we are reminded of the three fold blessings that God told Moses. Last night, I had the opportunity to lead the Shabbat service and reach out to my family and our community and share the same blessings our ancestors used to pray to God. The important part is the blessing of peace. Today as I stand before you, we are reminded that individuals are blessed all the

time. These blessings of peace are something that we should treasure in our hearts forever.

In the world there are many things that humans keep close to their heart.

When I read my parsha, it reminded me of what I keep close to my heart which is my family. Being close to my family is a gift I will always treasure in my heart.

My mom and my dad have always been there for me. I always love seeing them on the sidelines at my games cheering me on.

Dad, even though you are not the guy that says a lot during the game, you always have something to say to me about the game during the car ride home. And mom I love hanging out with you I know I can always come with you for anything. I and I always come to you to have a tickle fight but I think we all know who wins thatmee!! But I am now coming to you today saying thanks so much for everything you have done to make this day so special to me.

With out the both of you I would have never be where I am today with out your love and support.

Look where I am standing today and all that I have accomplished at this point in my life.

XXXXXXXXXX, we are just like any other brothers and sisters, and I love you very much.

Together we fight and we know how to push each other to our limits. But of course we always find a way to connect and love each other.

Without all of you guys in my life, I would never have been this happy.

And now I am proud to say I am fully entering the Jewish world as a young woman. I want to say thank you to Rabbi Micah for working with me to understand the Judaism. Also, thank you to all my religious school teachers who have given me their patience and guidance and reach the goal of becoming a Bat Mitzvah.

I want to give a special thank you to my tutor, Mr. Hannaford, for staying after school and helping me perfect my Torah reading and prayers which challenged me. This synagogue has been very important to me and my family. Thank you to the congregation for providing a

great place for my family to celebrate out Judaism. Thank you to the Sisterhood and the Men's Club for the Kiddush cup, the Jewish Book of Why and the candlestick holders.

Mom and Dad, thank you. Yes it was a long journey to get here, but this definitely would have never happened with out you and your support. Thank you to my relatives for showing me the meaning of togetherness.

Lastly, I want to thank all my friends, coaches, and teammates that have stood by my side throughout the years. In order to prepare for my

Bat Mitzvah there were times when I could not
make games or miss practices and you always
understood.

Thank you to all for being here today.

Shabbat shalom