

Instead of Getting Gifts, 10-Year-Old Birthday Girl Gives Them

By **SUSAN JACOBS**
JEWISH JOURNAL STAFF

THEY already had plenty of necklaces, Webkinz, and the latest Hannah Montana CD. Like many of the North Shore kids, there wasn't anything **Samantha Krinsky** of Beverly really needed. So on her tenth birthday, she decided to make her party all about helping others.

Instead of bringing gifts for her, the Cohen Hillel Academy fifth-grader asked for children's books to be donated to the burn unit at Shriners Burns Hospital-Boston. And at the actual party, which took place in February, her guests created silk flower centerpieces for the dining room at Grosvenor Park Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Salem.

Samantha had personal reasons for supporting the Shriners Hospital. "My great grandfather Samuel, who I am named for, was a Shriner, and my grandmother was a Daughter of the Nile, which is a part of the Shriners organization," she said.

Prior to the party, Samantha called the hospital to see what they needed. They specifically requested children's books in Spanish. On her invitations, Samantha asked guests to either bring a Spanish book, or donate money so she could purchase them.

She wound up collecting a total of 75 books, which she delivered to the center after the party.

Her connection to Grosvenor Park was also personal. As part of the curriculum, many CHA fourth-graders visit the nursing home residents and form relationships with them. Samantha decided that it would be nice to make colorful centerpieces to adorn the dining room tables at the facility.

"I like doing art, and I wanted to do something for the nursing home," said Samantha, who invited about a dozen girls to her party. "We painted glass vases with flowers, stripes and polka dots, and filled them with fake flowers and marbles. They came out really nice," she added.

The idea to craft centerpieces came from CHA teacher **Ellen Lodgen**, who provided the supplies and helped guide the girls at the party.

"One of the things they learn at Cohen Hillel is about giving back. We are very proud that Sam was thinking beyond getting presents for herself for her birthday," said her mother, **Debbie**, who after the party received an email from another CHA parent applauding the idea.

"I think it's far more meaningful to the kids [to attend a party like this]. They feel a lot of pride in learning to think beyond themselves," Debbie said. "Besides, how much more junk do we need to collect and throw away a year later?" she added.

When asked what her friends thought about her unique party, Samantha said, "They thought it was fun doing stuff for others. Instead of getting presents, you're giving presents."

Although Samantha was the first of her friends to throw a "giving back" birthday party, perhaps this will mark the beginning of a trend by youths who want to celebrate their birthdays by shunning presents and helping the less fortunate.

Shriners Burns Hospital-Boston Important Numbers

Main Number: 617-722-3000 Front Desk

Human Resources: 617-371-4768 Bonnie Lassell

Patient Applications: 617-371-4843 Jackie Castro

Administration: 617-371-4721 Dolores Sansone

Development: 617-371-4746 David Faulkner

PR/Marketing: 617-371-4784 Kathy Golden

Your Shrine Hospital Children's Transportation Fund Thanks You!

Nobles all,

Through your labors, the Aleppo Shrine Hospital Children's Transportation Fund has expended well over \$200,000 dollars in 2007. These funds are mostly voluntary donations and are the result of your hard work. Though they are Shrine Hospital Funds and fully deductible, they are distributed locally to aid and transport children in our two Massachusetts hospitals.

Our football committee, under the direction of Noble **Robert F. Smith**, was able to raise \$85,000.00 this year. Our Can Drive (Paper Drive) has raised \$63,000.00. The thanks for this go mostly to the Cape Cod, Southeastern Mass., King Philip, North Shore and Weary Travelers Shrine Clubs. Nobles **Dave Hutchinson**, **Roger Metcalfe**, and **Paul Agostino**, the Cape Cod Shrine Club and the King Philip Shrine Club have been busy collecting and turning tons of tabs into \$4,000.00 for Transportation. We can not thank you all enough for your time and labors.

This year, Aleppo was able to give Springfield Hospital \$30,000.00 to enable them to fly a number of patients from the Dominican Republic and Haiti. These flights could be scheduled, and as they were not emergencies, were considerably less expensive. Some of our acute flights to Boston Hospital included two from Honduras, \$26,250.00 & \$15,900.00, and one from Merida, \$22,136.00. Transporting local patients to and from the Hospitals is also included.

If you are not part of this labor of love, we ask you to get yourself or your Shrine Club involved now. No matter how well we do, each next year brings new children in need of our Hospitals and new expenses to cover. It would be devastating to be forced to refuse a flight or care for a patient because of a lack of funds.

Remember, our aim is not just to raise money but also to educate everyone we can of the wonderful things our Hospitals do for the children and to find new children in need of our services.

We again thank you for your past efforts. We expect great things from you in the future and we know your hearts will swell with the knowledge that you have promoted your Shrine Hospitals and helped the children so desperately in need of our services.

Fraternally,

Peter K. Stone and the Committee

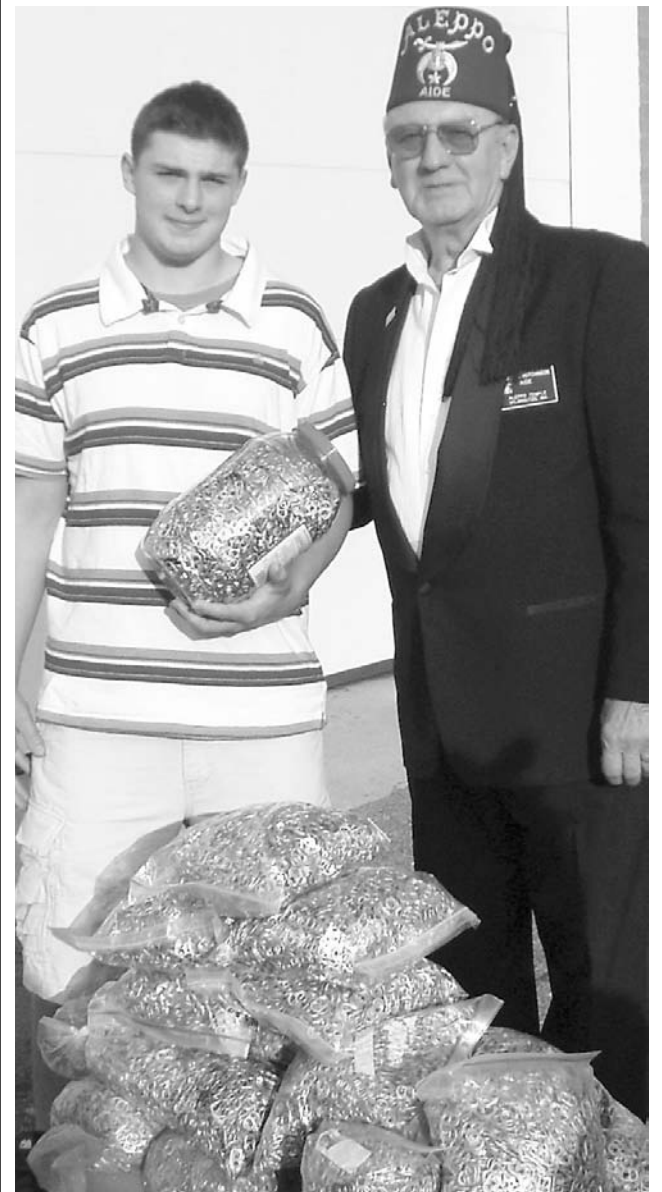


Fifty More Pounds!

NICK Russo, a Junior at Wilmington High School started collecting tabs in Middle School as part of a project for the National Junior Honor Society. He has kept up with collecting the tabs since. He met with the Tab Chairman, **Dave "Hutch" Hutchinson** after the October 6, 2007, Ceremonial and brought in fifty pounds worth to the Aleppo Shrine Center.

Nick has had help from his family and friends with obtaining the tabs and they send them his way. This fifty pounds took him a year to acquire.

Members of the community, both young and old, have been increasingly participating in the Tab program here at Aleppo. Dropping off larger and larger amounts of tabs as well as the small quantities, in every type of container you can think of. In the past year two and a half tons of tabs have been turned in to the recycle center with the proceeds going to the Aleppo Shriners Children's Transportation Fund.



AFTER THE October 6, 2007, Ceremonial, Nick Russo met with Tab Chairman, Dave "Hutch" Hutchinson to drop off the fifty pounds of tabs that he saved up for the Aleppo Shriners Children's Transportation Fund.

Toys for Tots Donates Toys to Boston Burns Hospital

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because they brought out all these boxes, after expecting only a few dozen toys, and all the Sergeants had was a small rental car to put them in." John wasn't sure he was going to fit them into his van!

They then went to the Hospital, unloaded the toys and got a tour from **Greg Walsh**. They weren't expecting to see any of the patients, but were thrilled to visit them and talk. John said that the children were impressed with their uniforms, and were very excited to have their special visitors spend time with them. The Sergeants were also excited and impressed with the children, especially with what they are going thru. John said they didn't want to leave their new friends.

They were also impressed with the state-of-the-art facility and faculty.

Both Sergeant Pratt and Johnson are with the Ordnance Contact Team 1 at Ft. Devens. They are part of an Inspector Instructor team. Their mission is to train the reservist who drill out of their unit.

Gunny Sgt. Pratt has been with the Marines for eighteen years. Master Sergeant Johnson has been in for twenty years. For more information on the Toys for Tots visit: www.toysfortotsma.org.