

Thank you so much, everybody, for joining us in celebrating Nathan's achievements today!

Oh man...that was so awesome.

I don't have many memories of my father, who died when I was barely 7. I know of him through stories mostly, and glimpses of him from the back of my mind. I remember getting spanked once, when I tricked my younger brother out of the swing set. My dad was so mad at me! Actually can't think of any other spankings, far as that goes, but it dovetails with my strongest memory. He was already sick by the time I was six. Thinking about it now, I'm sure he had no idea...me at six and my brother just 5, knowing he wasn't going to live. What did he want me to know? To convey? He wrote the word "honor" on a piece of paper and asked me if I knew what it was. I said "honer" b/c I fancied myself a reader...but I couldn't really explain. He did, and went on to discuss with me the importance he placed on my living honorably even after he passed.

I thought so much about my own dad even as I was becoming one. What would he think of us? What would he want for us. What would he say to Nathan if he could've had a chance? When he was born, or now? So on Nathan's 8<sup>th</sup> day, when he first entered into a Covenant with Judaism, I put my hand on his head and wished for him three "H's": Health, Happiness, and Honor.

13 years later, and my dad sure couldn't ask for more. Who could? This guy... I can't ask for more, but to renew my wish, and wish for these same three H's for another 13 years, and until 120.

I am so blown away by you. You honor us, and bring us so much happiness. I'm humbled every day, amazed by your grace, thoughtfulness, compassion, and depth. You are, very simply, mensch, but you are so much more than that.

Nathan, may you continue to be you, to be strong and decisive and sure of yourself the way you are now. May you continue to be generous of spirit, open to people in all their ways. May you continue to seek knowledge and adventure and shape your world and ours into the vision you most definitely see.

Just a few more things -

Please allow me to mention a few people that aren't here today but would've if they could. First, Nathan's grandfather, Bill Cohen, who died last year. I can't think of anyone else who'd be so proud of Nathan today. My Aunt Minna, who is, at this point, the Jewish matriarch in my extended family. And my stepfather who's every bit Nathan's grandfather, Harry Theisen, who is recovering from a fall. We're holding spaces for all of them today!

On their behalf, and all of us, my thanks to the TBS community. From our very first Kabbalat Shabbat, when we heard you sing, to the BB Camp Retreat with Rabbi Dan, and thenceforth - we've connected with so many wonderful Jewish people in Salem. Thanks to Cassidy, for running such a great Jewish education program. Thanks to the teachers for working with Nathan and getting us to this day. You all did this. And thank to Rabbi Eli and all the Herbs. I said before you got here that I was curious to see how your first Bar Mitzvah would go with Nathan as the one. You met him as he is and guided him and taught him. You welcomed him to be him. Finally, Joan Miles. I can't say enough. I never really understood what Nathan was doing all these Tuesday nights for the last 10 month or whatever. I'd catch glimpses, during services, but never really knew. To hear all of this? Wow!

I could go on and on, but I think I've said enough. Everyone here is part of Nathan. Thanks again for coming, and Shabbat Shalom.