

THE MOTHER- DAUGHTER DINNER

**A great way to reward teens, educate
parents, and strengthen families**

INTRODUCTION

The Mother-Daughter Dinner is an elegant social night out for moms to see how their daughters who volunteer with the Friendship Circle are making serious positive differences in the lives of special-needs children. It makes the teen volunteers proud of what they're doing, and allows moms to see that their children are part of something special. This is similar to what is commonly referred to as Parents' Night. (Note: You can also stage a similar Father-Son event, only with different activities and structure.)

INVITATIONS

The invitations make a big difference because they reflect the taste and elegance level of the evening—and you never get a second chance to make a first impression. Thus, the fancier the invitation, the fancier the event is expected to be—so be sure you can live up to your impressions!

The entire programme should be clearly laid out so that there is no confusion. You may want to include the dress expectation. We found that when we indicated, for example, that the dress code was “dressy/casual” we did not receive as many frantic calls on what to wear. Nevertheless, volunteers should take it seriously, and the dress code does contribute to the elegance of the evening.

Invitations should be sent out no later than three (3) weeks in advance. Extra phone calls, reminders and emails are always necessary. In addition, adding the event to your e-mail signature serves as a reminder to RSVP.

FOOD

Indicating *on the invitation* that dinner will be served allows for people to plan accordingly. (Fact: Frum people eat more.) In order to avoid a crush at the food table, enough salads, breads and drinks must be placed on each table, thereby only requiring the people to go to the buffet for the main dish. Although it is easier to use a buffet table, sometimes with a lot of people the lines could be irritatingly long. Be sure to have enough buffet tables to adequately serve the amount of people attending.

PROGRAMME

School Presidents' Meetings

In every public or private school with more than ten FC volunteers, two girls should be appointed as school FC presidents. They will be your contact point and representatives for their school. Meetings with all the school presidents should be held every two months to discuss different issues. This makes them feel important and will encourage them to put forth the needed effort for the Mother-Daughter Dinner (or other projects).

At the meetings, presidents “help” plan the Mother-Daughter Dinner program: Be prepared with some ideas of your own and guide them to the plan you would approve.

Various Ideas for School Presentations

Under the leadership and organization of its presidents, each school can prepare its own presentation for the Mother-Daughter Dinner. For example, Friendship Circle of Detroit's Mother-Daughter Dinner featured this:

1. West Bloomfield High School (Torah Circle and Torah Teens): video presentation
2. Jewish Academy (Friends@LifeTown): massive collage
3. Hillel (Life Skills): slideshow
4. Bais Yaakov: slideshow

Delegating Dinner Chores

Preparing the dinner entails many different tasks—and delegating these to your volunteers is important because it gives them all a part in it. Although it may cause you more work, it is worth it because the volunteers and presidents then have more ownership of the event, and will be sure to invite all of their friends, too. Allow plenty of lead time for mistakes, so that you're panicked and rushed at the end.

Tasks to be delegated

Dinner Invitations: Graphically designing invitations, envelope stuffing and labeling, stamping and mailing. You can even turn the entire labeling/stuffing/mailing chore into an afternoon party!

Food: Preparing elegant, original desserts; sharing of recipes

Table decorations and centerpieces: Researching, planning, purchasing arts and crafts supplies, designating someone's house to be the workshop where these items are crafted

Entertainment: Research, select and practice mother/daughter game

Sample Programme

TIME	EVENT PART
7:00 p.m.	Start 1. Slide show playing on screen in front of room 2. Fruit roll ups and wooden skewers on each table with directions how to make roses out of them for Mom.
7:15 p.m.	Speaker (Head of Friendship Circle)
7:20 p.m.	Volunteer and Mom speak
7:30 p.m.	Volunteers entertain with singing
7:40 p.m.	Mom of special-needs child speaks (A table of moms of kids with special needs can be a powerful addition.)
7:45 p.m.	Slide show plays with Chana'le Fellig's "Special Child" playing in background
7:50 p.m.	Video presentation
8:00 p.m.	Mother/Daughter game Ten girls exit room mid-program to don disguises, and return with moms on stage, who have to determine which girl is their daughter.

Additional ideas:

1. Take pictures of mothers with their daughters: Either print them on-site to be taken home, or send them out the next week as souvenir postcards with stickers on the back reading “Mother-Daughter Dinner, [DATE HERE].”
2. Sushi-making is a fun variation to possibly include.

SUMMARY

For a rousing, successful event, you don’t need major entertainment—you need to just make moms proud of what their daughters are doing.

And the more pride they feel, the more they’ll support the Friendship Circle.