

YOUR SIMCHA

CASSILEE KAHN

It's never too late for a bar mitzvah

Who: Jake Campbell
When: June 13, 2010
Where: Yeshiva Centre, Bondi
Rabbi: Eli Feldman

EIGHT years after his 13th birthday Jake Campbell finally celebrated his bar mitzvah last week.

Jake, the vice chairman of Australasian Union of Jewish Students at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), was living in the Sutherland Shire with his Jewish mother Lilia at 13 but didn't feel comfortable having a bar mitzvah because he has a non-Jewish father, James.

While his mother always kept a Jewish home his unique bar mitzvah journey began when he coincidentally met Rabbi Eli Feldman at a young adult Yom Ha'atzmut party this year.

After finding out that Jake had never been bar mitzvah'ed, much less put on tefillin, Rabbi Feldman quickly got to work and organised for Jake to have his long-awaited bar mitzvah.

"When Rabbi Feldman offered to bar mitzvah me I knew I wanted to do it because it would make me feel completely Jewish," Jake said.

The freestyle taekwondo instructor celebrated with a kiddush at the Yeshiva Centre with 50 family and friends.

Rabbi Feldman was elated for his new pupil.

"I have been a rabbi for eight years and this is the proudest moment of my rabbinical career," the rabbi said.

Jake chose his devar torah as last week because it talks about how in every generation Jews should feel as though he or she went forth from Egypt because it relates to him.

"It describes that feeling of complete Jewishness that I felt after having my barmitzvah."

The UNSW arts/education student recalls being petrified the night before his bar mitzvah. He woke up at 4.30am to go on youtube to practice the pronunciation and tune of his Torah blessings.

"When I got into shul, I completely forgot the tune, which made me more terrified.

"But after the blessings, speech and everyone's mazeltovs, I was completely overcome with joy and relief.

"It just made me feel really special."

Jake said he now feels complete.

"It feels like I'm properly Jewish now and really part of the Jewish community."

To nominate a wedding or bar/bat mitzvah,
email ckahn@jewishnews.net.au.



Jake Campbell celebrated his bar mitzvah at the age of 21 last week.