

U.S.

Harvey Doesn't Stop a Bar Mitzvah

Adam Buchsbaum becomes a bar mitzvah after another boy's ceremony

By Lynn Cook

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As Hurricane Harvey's storm clouds gathered over Houston last week, Adam Buchsbaum started to get nervous.

His bar mitzvah was scheduled for the weekend. The coming-of-age rite for Jewish boys to mark their 13th birthday was supposed to start on Saturday with a religious service and end with a blowout party.



Adam Buchsbaum got to read his Torah portion in a small, spontaneous service on the day his bar mitzvah celebration was cancelled due to flooding. PHOTO: THE BUCHSBAUM FAMILY

Harvey blew into town instead, dumping record rain. The head rabbi at Beth Israel, a synagogue in Houston's Meyerland neighborhood, visited Adam at his house Friday to explain that he had to postpone the event.

"He took it hard initially but he's a smart kid and a resilient kid," said Adam's dad, Billy Buchsbaum.

By Sunday, Beth Israel, the oldest synagogue in Texas, was filled with 3 feet of floodwater. But thanks to a nearby synagogue, Adam was still able to commemorate his occasion.

On Saturday, Adam and his parents went to neighboring Beth Yeshurun to see a friend's bar mitzvah. Afterward, in a room way from the main sanctuary, he was permitted to read the portion of the Torah that he had planned to read during his own bar mitzvah to a small service gathered on site.

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It was the Shoftim, which contains one of the most famous phrases in the Torah: "Justice, justice shall you pursue."

"It was a magical, perfect and meaningful moment we will never forget and we feel so grateful," said Adam's

mother, Laurie Buchsbaum. "The purest, best side of religion on display."

The family was lucky in other ways as well: unlike many of their neighbors in Meyerland, their home, a newer house built higher off the ground, didn't take in water during the storm.

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