



Women to Know

AGE: 43

LOCATION: St. Louis Park,
Minnesota

HOBBIES: Her three children

THIS WEEK WITH

Wendy Berezovsky

Wendy Goldman Berezovsky grew up in Middle America, the youngest of four siblings in a close-knit family. The

Goldmans were affiliated with a Conservative synagogue, but it was only a matter of time before Wendy learned more about *Yiddishkeit* and became fully observant. Eventually she married Mike, who was also invested in becoming closer to Hashem, and the couple established a *frum* home.

The proud parents of Reuven, almost three, and Eliana, 18 months old, the Berezovskys had no idea that their lives would be turned upside down by the birth of their third child. Baby Dalya was born with what seemed to be a swollen upper lip. No one seemed concerned, but when it hadn't gone away a few days later, the doctors decided to do an MRI. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief when it was determined that the swollen lip was not indicative of a rare form of cancer the doctors had wanted to rule out.

Unfortunately, that wasn't the end of the story. A couple of months later Dalya began to have breathing problems. More medical tests revealed that the doctors had been mistaken, and the baby was belatedly diagnosed with rhabdomyosarcoma—a condition so rare that experts were unsure how to treat it.

Having lost two of her grandparents and her father within a period of four months, Wendy had already learned a harsh lesson about the fragility of life. This new chapter, however, would prove to be an even greater challenge.

Staying sane through little Dalya's chemotherapy and radiation was no easy feat. The support Wendy got from her community was a great source of *chizzuk*. A *Tebillim* group was also started as a merit for her daughter. But Wendy will forever be most grateful to her mother, who put her own life on hold to take over her daughter's household responsibilities.

The months passed and the treatments didn't seem to be working, so a name was added in the hope of turning the baby's *mazal* around; she was now Chaya Dalya. But by

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the time she was 13 months old, the doctors threw up their hands in defeat. “The time has come to stop torturing her,” they advised her parents. “There’s nothing else to be done.”

But Wendy Berezovsky refused to give up. With tears rolling down her face, she pleaded that they do *something*, and a second surgery was performed to remove the residual tumor. As a last resort, a drug that was being used to fight a totally different kind of cancer was prescribed—and it worked! The Berezovskys were incredibly thankful.

Sitting and watching little Chaya Dalya on the mend in her hospital crib, Wendy was suffused with *bakaras batov*. “I knew I had to do something positive,” she explained later, “something to give back a little and help others.”

Wendy came up with a novel idea. She thought about the drab hospital pajamas, which only emphasized that a child was sick, and she decided to buy some colorful PJs for Chaya Dalya. She was amazed by the shift that occurred, not only in her daughter’s mood but in the attitude of her

caretakers!

Wendy decided to establish a program to donate brand-new, cheerful pajamas to hospitalized children—and thus the non-profit Sweet Dreams for Kids organization was born.

On the anniversary of Chaya Dalya’s first operation in December 2008, Wendy and her family made their first donation. With the help of a generous grant from the Hanna Anderssen children’s clothing company, 75 pairs of cute, brightly colored pajamas were donated to Children’s Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota.

The news spread like wildfire, and more and more companies contacted Wendy to make donations. Pajama parties were organized, and individuals started donating too. It seemed like everyone around Wendy had caught her “pajama fever.”

To date, Wendy and Mike Berezovsky have donated over 10,000 pairs of pajamas to various hospitals in the Twin Cities and as far away as Des Moines, Dallas and San Diego. Keeping things in the family, the Berezovsky children eagerly help out with the tagging and labeling. Wendy has been

interviewed on several local news stations, which in turn has led to more pajama donations.

Wendy beams with pride as she talks about her “walking miracle,” Chaya Dalya. Today this courageous little girl is ten years old and has a beautiful sparkle in her eyes. The family’s collective positive attitude is what keeps them going. To know Chaya Dalya is to know that Hashem runs the world. Wise beyond her years, she has her mother’s *emunah* and *bitachon*, knowing that life is good and that Hashem is holding her hand.

Wendy is convinced that Chaya Dalya’s *simchas bachaim* comes from the love and attention of her siblings, Reuven and Eliana. As for the future, she is cautiously optimistic, afraid to let down her guard. Wendy doesn’t like the word “remission”; she prefers “miracle” instead.

To Wendy, her children are her life. As she tries to make up for lost time, she remembers to thank Hashem in all her activities each day, taking nothing for granted—because every blessing in life is a reason to be truly grateful. ■

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