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MEMBER PROFILE - MARCH 2001

Laura Starr Levensgard

Laura Starr Levensgard is a creative person who enjoys beads and likes to work with young people. Despite experience in the hotel business, she began working for a bead store in Bethesda shortly after she was married and remained there until her first son was a year old. When she found a way to combine her love of beads with a great idea for unique parties, she created Starr's Beaded Jewelry in 1995.

Laura repairs and designs jewelry, often using her favorite antique vintage glass from Italy and Czechoslovakia. She displays many of her designs at The Waygoose in Rockville and also sees customers privately. The most unusual part of Laura's business, however, is the bead party part of Starr's Beaded Jewelry.

Laura goes to birthday parties, Bar/Bat Mitzvah parties and other celebrations, Girl Scout and Brownie troops and other gatherings, entertaining children and adults (age 6 and up). To date, she has done about 400 parties at people's homes, community centers, hotels, etc. The parties, held during evenings and weekends, give Laura the flexibility to be home during the day for her two sons, ages 7 and 3-1/2. She is often the cocktail entertainment for children at Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, bringing hundreds of thousands of beads from all over the world and helping the young guests create necklaces, earrings and key chains. This unique business is fun and challenging. "There's no one within 100 miles who goes to people's homes to do these things," says Laura.

Laura advertises in Washington Parent and Families magazines. People also find her through her web site, www.beadparty.com and through a new magazine called Mazel Tov, especially for people having Bar and Bat Mitzvahs. What does Laura like best about her work? "Every day is different, I get out of my house to do my jobs, the kids are so good, and the occasions are all happy. It's fun all around."

Laura joined WBO at about the same time that she launched her business. She has been Membership Chair, Registrar and, most recently, Gala Chair, a position which she calls a great deal of work but notes, "I met some really great people." Over 400 people attended this incredibly well-organized event which was definitely "a positive experience" for Laura. As an enthusiastic Mastermind group member, Laura finds the other members' "suggestions and rapport" especially helpful and always enjoys "the give and take of ideas."