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DECORATE, EDUCATE, CELEBRATE —
MELANIE AND BRAD WEBER WILL DO
IT ALL FOR YOUR KIDS.

BY SHELLI LIEBMAN DORFMAN

Growing Room



With plenty of expectant and new parents among their friends, husband and wife Brad and Melanie Weber, both 27, are well aware of the high-stress measures involved in planning for a baby — especially in the nesting department.

So they created Mother Nursery, a business founded to remove the feelings of cluelessness and “Where-do-we-turn-for-help?” in all aspects of early parenthood, from crating bedrooms and playrooms and planning celebrations to researching child care. And with a large component of their business revolving around the infants of Jewish couples — designing and implementing their bedrooms, for example — the Webers have filled a niche left open by many Jewish couples who traditionally do not want baby items in the house until baby is there, too.

Almost two years ago, Marisa and Hector Hernandez of West Bloomfield were the luck recipients of their friends’ talents. Melanie, a graphic designer, and Brad, a Realtor and builder, wanted to do something special for the impending arrival of the Hernandezes’ baby. Working with the door shut so it would be a surprise, the Webers created and designed the nursery for Alexa Hernandez, now 22 months.

After Alexa’s room was finished, Melanie and Brad merged their talents and resources into Mother Nursery, which they launched this past January in their Oak Park home, with Melanie holding the position of CEP and Brad, CFO.

“This is the first business we have been involved in together,” says Melanie, who met Brad at a B’nai B’rith Youth Organization regional convention when they both were in the night grade. “But together we have taken one another’s strengths to create the success of Mother Nursery. Our hearts and souls are in the company.”

The Webers will order and store all the furniture at their insulated Royal Oak warehouse until they get work of the impending baby delivery. Then they zoom into action with their own delivery, bring everything, right down to the washed and ironed bedding, if requested. “We plan the room ahead of time to a ‘T,’” says Melanie. “We want the parents to enjoy the time with their child and don’t want to interfere, so we’ll work around the clock to make this happen, even building many things ahead of time so when we get the call, we are ready to go.” In addition to the

intercepting obstacles in the ordering, delivering and setup process, the Webers will also accommodate some future-parents’ needs: If a couple doesn’t want to know in advance if their baby is a boy or girl, for example, plans will be drawn up for two bedrooms, one for each possibility. Then, they will contact the mom’s doctor to find out which one to follow through on.

Encouraging parents to play a role in the creation of their child’s room, client meetings include talk of colors, theme, wall coverings, bedding, furniture, artwork, lighting, flooring, layout and budget. While Melanie discusses details ranging from fabric and material allergies and if the room will eventually be shared by a sibling, Brad conducts a room examination, measuring walls, windows and ceiling heights and drawing a room sketch. Clients pay a one-time design fee or an hourly rate with some items receiving Mother Nursery discounts.

The company has already gone national, too: “This past June, they designed a room for a now 3-month-old Bryanna Lester in Hartford, Conn. With Bryanna’s Mom, Alisa, photographing the room and her dad, Michael, doing the measuring, Melanie was able to create layouts with Mother Nursery’s three-dimensional computer program. Working with a piece of Bryanna’s bedding set — purchased from a local Babies “R” Us — and fabric swatches from a rocking-chair cushion hand crafted by Bryanna’s grandma — Melanie synchronized room colors, long distance.

“There are so many coordinating details that just bring the room together,” says Alisa. “Had I done the room myself, I would have just painted the walls and thrown some pictures up. But Mother Nursery designed flower boxes and three-dimensional flowers to hang on the wall. The color contrasts are great and really appealing to my daughter. I really think that this nursery will help in her cognitive development.”

With few baby and children’s furniture stores in Metro Detroit, Mother Nursery’s extensive access to in-state and out-of-state manufacturers is a big plus when ordering. “We have many more choices than someone just driving around because customers may also order from our online store,” explains Brad.

In addition to furniture the Web site offers accessories, like towels, bibs and diaper bags, and

personalized wooden items, including rocking chairs, name letters and stepping stools, all in colors and patterns that coordinate to the room.

When the company was first created, Melanie says, “Brad and I did it all.”

Now carpenters, electricians, painters, custom furniture makers, upholsters and what Melanie refers to as “all-around handymen” make up the Mother Nursery team, who even do extensive work like installations of closet and room organizers, cabinets, shelving, chair rails and crown molding.

Party Planning

Watching the best laid pre-baby plans go by the way-side by tired, distracted, new parents, Melanie and Brad also offer innovative, post-baby services. Many couples have enough forethought to order baby announcements before the baby’s birth, but discover the pile of adorable cards just sit there after the new addition’s arrival. “We will address and get them out in the mail for them,” says Melanie. They will do the same with invitations and will address — and even write — thank you notes. Mother Nursery also offers custom-designed stationary items.

For party planning, they work with caterers and do the grocery shopping for celebrations like baby namings, showers and festivities that accompany a bris. They provide cleaning and wait staff and order chairs, linens and specialty items like cigars and personalized cookies. They work with mohels to make sure all the supplies for a bris are on hand. They will research child care and playgroups. And this month — as members of the International Association for Child Safety — they will launch a service that provides childproofing in a home or business.

While, at first Mother Nursery focused mainly on baby-room décor, Melanie says, “Now, we do it all: doctors’ offices, playrooms, toddler rooms, tween rooms, daycares and eve a room in a grandmother’s house.”

In addition to spaces that start out empty, Mother Nursery can build a room around a treasured piece — which they can refinish or restore — as was the case for 3-year-old Rayna, the daughter of Marla and Dr. Jason Golnick of West Bloomfield. “She was using my white, high-gloss Formica bedroom set from when I was a little girl,” says Marla. “When I

“When I called Melanie and Brad I had also already purchased bedding from Pottery Barn Kids. They took what I had and embellished it.”

Now — with a new painted desk chair, a shag area rug, colorful closet knobs, and a mural and painted wooden flowers and butterflies on the walls — the room is transformed. “And Melanie and Brad were here every step of the way,” says Marla.

And that’s the point — being there alongside the parent, taking over the stressful stuff so they don’t have to. And aside from being the buffer between vendors and clients, adds Brad, “We want to be there to guide the parents to help guide their child in the right direction, not only with room décor but with what they can do as parents. We are not just decorators, but educators.”

