**An article you can adapt or excerpt**

**for your community newsletter or blog**

Reconstructing Judaism.

This phrase embodies the decades-long, evolving mission of all who have been a part of the Reconstructionist movement.

Now, **Reconstructing Judaism** is the new name of the central organization of the Reconstructionist movement, replacing the former: Reconstructionist Rabbinical College & Jewish Reconstructionist Communities.

As many of you may already know, Reconstructing Judaism runs a rabbinical seminary, serves and supports our community and roughly 100 other congregations and *havurot* across North America and abroad, cultivates Jewish living that is relevant to today’s Jews, provides resources that foster Jewish learning, brings Jewish values to the public sphere and elevates youth at two Reconstructionist Jewish camps. We are proud to be affiliated with this organization and part of the Reconstructionist movement.

Rabbi Deborah Waxman, Ph.D., president of Reconstructing Judaism, said that “our new name is so expressive of what we do and what we always aspire to do. More than ever, Judaism must be about doing, and our name is about doing.”

This new name developed in a yearlong, quintessentially Reconstructionist process that placed a high value on discussion, participation and the sharing of ideas. Members of our community and congregations and *havurot* across North America were invited to share insights in a series of town halls and surveys that took place in-person and online. All told, more than 1,000 Reconstructionist rabbis, congregants, educators, staff members and students, from Los Angeles to New York, from Portland to Montreal, shared their insights. Readers of this article may remember their participation in 2017.

The discussions focused on big picture ideas about how the organization serves the communities and ways the Reconstructionist story can be told to inspire more people to engage in Jewish communities and experiences.

One of the results of this process was the decision to stick with a version of the word “Reconstructionist” in the organization’s name. The idea was considered to drop the word Reconstructionist, but Reconstructionists like us across the continent made clear they were strongly attached to the word and considered it part of their identity. By adding the *ing*, the organization is enhancing the clarity of who they are and what they do.

“We are not taking on a new identity. It is more accurate to say that we are adopting a new expression of our identity,” explained Seth Rosen, who chairs Reconstructing Judaism’s board of governors. “This was a deeply Reconstructionist process that drew on the thinking and ideas of so many. We gained a great deal of insight into what matters most to the people who are part of our movement.”

It is worth noting that *Reconstructing Judaism* was the memoir title of the late Rabbi Eisenstein: the first president of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College who built on the ideas of his father-in-law, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, and launched Reconstructionist Judaism as a movement.

“Many of us grew up in a time when Judaism was simply a matter of being; we were Jewish because of the neighborhood we grew up in, the food we ate, the culture we absorbed. Not anymore,” said Waxman. “Our new name represents an active commitment to doing. ‘Reconstructing’ is the best expression of our approach to Judaism.”

The phrase — “Deeply rooted. Boldly relevant.” — expresses a reverence for Jewish tradition and its constant quest to cultivate Jewish experiences that are meaningful.

Waxman added that the phrase “shows that we live at the intersection of past and future. It tells the world that we are about taking chances, staking a claim on Judaism’s continued relevance for the future.”

The new logo—leaves sprouting from the ground and growing into the world—is meant to reflect a vision of Judaism that is at once grounded and flourishing, as embodied by the Reconstructionist communities, teachers, learners and rabbis the organization serves. It suggests a connection to tradition in its groundedness, and continuous growth and reinvention.  It exemplifies the spreading of joy, innovation and resilience. The hand-drawn style of the symbol and its accompanying typography speak to the *heimish* and unique personality of Reconstructionist communities, rabbinical students and rabbis.

This is going to be a busy year for Reconstructing Judaism and the movement as a whole. All whose lives have been impacted by a Reconstructionist rabbi will mark with pride the 50th anniversary of the seminary’s founding. Many of us will gather with fellow Reconstructionists from across the continent for the first Reconstructionist Convention in eight years from Nov. 15-18 in Philadelphia. The new Reconstructionist summer camp, Havaya Arts, opens on the West Coast as campers to return for another joyous summer at Camp Havaya on the East Coast. All the while, the nearly 100 affiliated Reconstructionist communities like ours—and more than 400 rabbis—will continue building a meaningful Jewish future and more perfect world.

As Rabbi Waxman said, “May we live up to the ideals and ideas embodied in this new expression of our identity. May we be worthy of our inheritance and effective builders of our future. May we go from strength to strength.”

I want to echo Rabbi Waxman’s words and pledge that, as a community, we will play an integral part in these efforts. We also look forward to an ongoing conversation about what it means to be reconstructing Judaism. Your voice is essential.