



*L'ev el L'ev*

HEART TO HEART  
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



**JULY 2025 / TAMMUZ - AV 5785**



**A Message from Rozan Anderson,**  
President, Heartland District

Dear WRJ,

Summer is now very much in full swing, and with it come other types of activities to enjoy, including warmer weather and longer days!

As some of our programmed life may have slowed down, this is a great time to relax a bit and contemplate what might be. What would you like to see and do next year? What types of activities will inspire you and others and fill you with joy? These are great questions to think about as you contemplate ideas for your women's groups, friendship circles, and other communities, as well as for yourself personally.

Over the past couple of weeks, I attended the Illinois Area Day and the East Heartland Regional. Kudos to our leaders who put together robust, thoughtful, well-appreciated programs!

This summer, you still have one more opportunity to join us in person for the Mid Heartland Regional in Ann Arbor, MI. All are invited, no matter where in the district you live. In addition to what promises to be a great event, you can also enjoy the renowned Ann Arbor art fairs just before our regional begins. I hope to see you there!

In this time of heightened anxiety in the world around us, I'm ever grateful for my family, friends, and loving communities. Together we try to make sense of it all, appreciate what we have, determine what we can do (and choose not to do), and move forward, strengthening one another.

Rogan



### Please Update Your Leadership Information for 2025-2026

Please fill out the [Leadership Change Form](#) with your most up-to-date leadership names and contact information, so that WRJ and the Heartland District can keep everyone informed with news, events, leadership tips, and more.

Due to limited space, you may submit the contact information of up to four leaders per form, or you can upload your full board list at the end of the form.

If you have any questions, please email [leadership@wrj.org](mailto:leadership@wrj.org) or call the WRJ office at (212) 650-4050.

## Heartland Upcoming Events



Registration Now Open  
**HEARTLAND DISTRICT  
MID REGION EVENT**  
*We Belong Together*

**JULY 19 - 20, 2025**  
**SATURDAY, 6 PM ET - SUNDAY, 2 PM ET**  
Temple Beth Emeth  
Ann Arbor, MI



[Click here](#) for more details and to register by this **Thursday, July 3**, or you can scan the QR code above.

The Mid Heartland Region includes Indiana, Sylvania (OH), Louisville (KY), and Michigan. All who want to belong to our WRJ community are also invited.

Questions? Email [Wendy Kohlenberg](mailto:Wendy.Kohlenberg).

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**2026 Heartland District**



# Convention

**March 13-15, 2026  
Indianapolis, IN**

## Help us Build a Heartland Banner

The Heartland District is building a banner that will be unveiled at the 2026 Heartland District Convention in Indianapolis and then used at district events. The banner will be assembled like a quilt with individual squares of artwork sewn together to create the banner.

This exciting, new district-wide project is the brainchild of creator Marci Kops, Area Director in Illinois. Leaders are encouraged to share this project with their sisterhoods/women's groups. Squares are due by November 12, 2025

**Email Marci Kops** to request a square. Please make sure you have appropriate postage.



Please [click here](#) for more details and instructions on how to create the squares.



## Support our URJ Camps



URJ camps enrich and transform lives by strengthening identity and knowledge, instilling Reform Jewish values, cultivating lifelong friendships, and creating memorable experiences. For generations of summers, camps serving the Heartland District (Camp George, GUCI, and OSRUI) have infused children, adults, and families with *ruach* (spirit), Jewish learning, and a deep sense of community.

WRJ Heartland District understands the impact that camps have on shaping our Jewish community and strengthening the future of the reform movement. Our affiliated sisterhoods/women's groups have a long history of supporting our camps, by donating \$1 per member to our Heartland District Camp Fund.





## Women's Work Weekend 2025

Summer camp at Goldman Union Camp Institute (GUCI) in Zionsville, IN, is in full swing and going strong! Thanks to the amazing group of women - WRJ Heartland District women and GUCI alumnae - who came together May 1-4 for a fun-filled weekend, as we prepared GUCI for our happy campers!

Those in attendance were able to: prepare the farm; cover camp in gorgeous flowers, remove weeds, and trim trees and bushes; organize the office, linen closet, supply closet, and the merchandise closet; master some amazing power tools while shoring up our Adirondack chairs and building flower boxes; and so much more!



Just as important, we were able to reconnect and to make new friends- hanging out, seeing the brand-new pool and bathhouse, making challah, welcoming *Shabbat* with a creative worship service and *Shabbat* meal, sharing in a beautiful *Havdalah* service, singing by the campfire, and strengthening the bonds that make this community so special. We truly could not have done it all without everyone who participated in the weekend, and we hope you'll join us in experiencing the "magic of GUCI" next spring! Mark your calendars for the 10th anniversary of our Women's Work Weekend at GUCI, May 14-17, 2026!

**Sandy Adland**, Event co-chair from Heartland District  
**Ali Greenland**, Event co-chair from GUCI Alumnae



## Heartland Event Recap

### Illinois Area Day at Temple Beth-El

On June 22, about 75 women gathered at Temple Beth-



El in Northbrook, IL, to reconnect with old friends and build new relationships while celebrating the strength and power of women. The theme of the day was *Empowered Women Empower Women*. The morning started with a prayer service, led by Cantor Stephanie Greene, new to Temple Beth-El, followed by workshops in social action, fundraising, programming, and more.

The workshops gave us options to learn valuable leadership and personal development skills. Rebecca Weininger, Deputy Regional Director for the Midwest Anti-Defamation League, spoke about antisemitism. A huge thanks to the Women of Temple Beth-El for inviting us into their spiritual home and creating such a warm and welcoming event.



## Social Justice



### Thoughts on Social Justice by Sally Frank, Heartland VP, Social Justice

I thought that this month I would focus on the attack against higher education that we are seeing from the President and some state legislatures. In some of our states, laws have been passed barring teaching of what the legislature calls Critical Race Theory, but is not that theory.

This bars teaching about the connection between race discrimination and other forms of discrimination like sex discrimination. It also bars mentioning things like white privilege which is the reason why I am rarely stopped driving a car while Black men are routinely stopped. It includes other things, as well. A couple of years ago, the Iowa legislature banned public universities from teaching about Critical Race Theory and at the same time required all faculty and staff to attend a free speech training. The irony was apparently lost on the legislature.

Some states are trying to ban tenure at their state schools, which eliminates academic freedom for faculty. In banning DEI at schools, legislatures have caused elimination of Gender Studies, African American studies, and other departments. Individual faculty have been afraid to include important topics in the syllabi lest their courses be canceled. Some states have banned teaching about "controversial subjects." I don't know how anyone can teach a constitutional law course and avoid controversial topics.

The state legislatures are not stopping at trying to ruin the education given by their public universities. There have been bills to deny different types of funding to private universities that encourage DEI. It will be important for all of



us to watch what goes on at our state legislatures and to speak out for academic freedom and quality higher education.

[Click here](#) to read the rest of Sally's article.



## Or Ami Awards Applications are Due By July 31!

Established in 1973, WRJ's **Or Ami "Light of My People" Award** for special achievement in programming recognizes exemplary events that can serve as models for other WRJ districts and women's groups. These awards honor those WRJ-affiliated groups undertaking replicable programs or projects of distinctive character and significance.



WRJ is proud to be a shining light, providing the path for outstanding programming. Now it is time to shine a light on our superstars in this area. Please share this information with your sisterhoods/women's groups.

**Applications must be submitted by Thursday, July 31, 2025, for programs between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025.**

To apply for the Or Ami Award, [click here](#). For more information, [click here](#).

Questions? Email [Talía Blank](#), WRJ Program Associate.

## Women of Reform Judaism Awards \$335K in Grants to Raise Jewish Feminist Voices Worldwide

Through its philanthropic arm, the YES (Youth, Education, and Special Projects) Fund, Women of Reform Judaism awarded over \$335,000 in grants to 34 programs that will encourage the growth of individuals as Jewish trailblazers and the advancement of Reform Movement institutions.



These grants help create inclusive communities by kickstarting Jewish engagement in youth, making leadership positions more accessible for women, and continuing our fight for egalitarian values in North America, Israel, and beyond.

"Women of Reform Judaism is proud of our impact as the philanthropic arm of the Reform Movement and a venture capitalist of the Jewish world at-large," WRJ President Karen Sim said.

Split among four categories: youth, education, special projects, and innovation, the grants are distributed annually, with bi-annual status reports submitted by all grantees. Approximately 60 percent of allocations went to Reform Movement partners, organizations that support the Reform Jewish Movement worldwide.

"At a pivotal moment for the Jewish people our leadership and support for our grantees is more needed now than ever. As we learn in the Talmud, '*Kol Yisrael arevim zeh ba'zeh* - all of Israel is responsible for one another,'" WRJ CEO Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch said.

To read more, [click here](#).

## How to Start Your Own *Lilith* Salon

WRJ Lilith Salons bring stimulating discussion about timely Jewish and feminist issues to sisterhoods worldwide, so members can learn about new topics, understand different perspectives, and engage in lively conversations. These salons are comprised of sisterhood women who meet four times a year to converse about thought-provoking articles from the quarterly ***Lilith Magazine***, utilizing WRJ-provided complimentary background articles, prompts, and discussion questions.



To learn how to start a *Lilith* Salon for your sisterhood or women's group, [click here](#).



## Now Playing...*Just for This* A Podcast with Rabbi Liz P. G. Hirsch

Each week, host Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch (she/her) interviews women in leadership *about* women and leadership. **Inspired by the story of Esther, we feature powerful stories of women who stand out in their fields**, who have stepped up just for this moment. Called *Just For This*, the podcast is committed to sharing powerful stories of women who stand out in their fields.

Listen to current and recent episodes at [justforthispodcast.com](http://justforthispodcast.com).

Follow [@JustForThisPodcast](https://www.instagram.com/JustForThisPodcast) on Instagram for episode updates.

## Women's Groups News and Events

### Tell Us About Your Sisterhood/Women's Group Events

Did you have an especially successful event in the past couple of months that other sisterhoods could replicate? Or an event coming up that is on Zoom or open to a wider audience? Please share it with the rest of us! That's what this section is all about—sharing great event ideas with your sisters across the Heartland!

Deadline for inclusion in an eblast is the 25th of the prior month. Send a write up on the event along with photos and contact info to [Andi Blain](#) or [Karen Dillon](#).

## Good & Welfare



Heartand District sends positive healing wishes to Rachel Olds, daughter of Shawna Olds, who was working for Birthright International for the past 4 weeks in Israel on a 10-week internship. She was there over the time of the "war." We are so happy she made it back safely.



We want to cheer for each other in the good times and support each other during the difficult ones. Please keep us informed of your celebrations, condolences and get well wishes. Email Shawna at [soldswrj@gmail.com](mailto:soldswrj@gmail.com).

Be well,  
**Shawna Olds**  
Good & Welfare Chair

## Heartland Products



### Get your Heartland District Pin!

[Click here](#) to order and pay by check.  
[Click here](#) to order and pay by credit card.

## Speakers Bureau



### Request a Speaker

The Heartland District's [Speakers Bureau](#) is a great tool to bring interesting and informative speakers to your organization. The speaker can address a specific problem or topics in general that can help your organization achieve its goals. Sisterhoods/women's groups in the Heartland District are entitled to a speaker every other year. There is no charge for a district speaker.

WRJ also has a speaker's program. To learn about both programs, please visit the Heartland District's website [here](#).

## Make a Gift to Heartland



A gift to the Heartland District is a wonderful way to recognize, remember, or honor the special people in your life: your sisterhood/women's group, your leadership, your clergy, your family, and friends.

Make a gift to WRJ Heartland District to say "thank you", "happy birthday", or congratulations", or to send get well wishes or condolences. An acknowledgement will be emailed to each person whose email address is provided.

[Click here](#) to donate. The Heartland District appreciates your support!

## Stay Connected

[Heartland District Website](#)  
[Heartland District Instagram](#)  
[Heartland District Facebook](#)  
[Heartland District Mighty Networks](#)





[WRJ Website](#)  
[WRJ Facebook Page](#)

We want to share your stories - about great programs you are doing that others may want to copy. Please send us a short paragraph and a few pictures after your event and we will be happy to include it in upcoming newsletters.

Our communications team is here to help you get the word out about all Heartland District events and programs. Please email a completed flyer or contact Karen Dillon if you need help.

**Materials must be received by the 25th of each month .**

We also want to thank Denise Fogel for the beautiful new Heartland Tree logo she created and granted us the rights to use it in our communications. We are so grateful for your creativity and talent!

[Andi Blain](#) and [Karen Dillon](#), Co-VPs Marketing & Communications

## Heartland District Forms & WRJ Resources

Useful links ►

[Alumnae Association Form](#)  
[Financial Deposit Form](#)  
[Financial Expense Reimbursement Form](#)  
[Financial Vendor Payment Request Form](#)  
[Leadership Change Form](#)  
[Speakers Bureau Request Form](#)  
[Treasurer's Work Sheet](#)  
[Zoom Meeting Request Form](#)

[WRJ's Brit Kehillah](#) (shared behavioral agreement)  
[Policy on Harassment](#)  
[WRJ's Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(REDI\) resources](#)  
[Microaggression resource](#)

**If you do not regularly receive our monthly *Lev el Lev* newsletter, [click here](#) to join our mailing list**

WRJ strengthens the voice of women worldwide and empowers them to create caring communities, nurture congregations, cultivate personal and spiritual growth, and advocate for and promote progressive Jewish values.



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