

# JDAIM FEBRUARY

Jewish Disability Awareness,  
Acceptance & Inclusion Month

**Since 2009, a growing number of Jewish communities have marked February as Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance and Inclusion Month (JDAIM). This year as part of Reconstructing Judaism's marking of JDAIM, Oseh Shalom is acknowledging the important work of disability justice during our Erev Shabbat service on February 23. We have also put together this brief handout to point you toward information and resources of potential interest.**

[Oseh-RDEI Activities](#): Here we focus on the part of our Committee's work to address "Aesthetics & Accessibility Inclusion". Recognizing Oseh Shalom's long history of attention to accessibility, members of Oseh-RDEI asked what changes we should consider to help our congregation's members and guests feel more comfortable when spending time at Oseh Shalom. We concluded that the aesthetics and accessibility of our beautiful shul, which first opened in 1991, may be enhanced to foster a deeper sense of inclusion across multiple dimensions, including race, gender, sexual identity, and disability. The following enhancement/modifications are the initial results of this focus:

- Improving access to the front entrance with the installation of a "speed table" to maintain elevation across the driveway as well as eliminating navigation of the curb when dropping off someone at the entrance
- Installation of an additional curb cut near the accessible parking spaces in our parking lot to better conform with parking accessibility guidelines
- Display of a new Welcome poster that is co-branded with Oseh Shalom and Reconstructing Judaism in our sanctuary foyer, making it clear to all who enter that inclusion, respect, and diversity are highly valued and acted upon in our community
- Installation of automatic openers for the front door and the school wing doors (funded via a Homeland Security grant that has accessibility benefits as well)
- Improving Bimah access by installing handrails along the steps and improved lighting (upcoming)

These items explore how aesthetics and accessibility issues can enhance inclusion, acceptance, and the quality of our experiences at Oseh Shalom. Recently, we began to comprehensively address accommodations for mobility and sensory impairments and will be reaching out to various constituencies as we gather information.

**If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact us at [oseh-rdei@oseh-shalom.org](mailto:oseh-rdei@oseh-shalom.org).**

**[Disability and Accessibility - Reconstructing Judaism](https://reconstructingjudaism.org/disability-and-accessibility)**: In January, Reconstructing Judaism launched a new Disability and Accessibility web page (<https://reconstructingjudaism.org/disability-and-accessibility>) that states: ***We at Reconstructing Judaism are committed to co-creating communities where people of all abilities can experience and participate fully and meaningfully in Jewish life.*** The webpage provides links to a variety of resources curated to support each community's commitments to disability justice such as:

- Sermons on Disability Justice
- Guides to best practices for accessibility in our communities
- Information about more inclusive prayers, rituals, & congregational resources to help uplift everyone during services (includes "disability-informed reformulations of Jewish ritual that may change the way you think about justice, spirituality, and communal responsibility")
- Words of Disability Torah and personal essays
- A selection of kid-friendly resources
- Links to other Jewish disability support & informational networks
- Upcoming Reconstructionist events focused on Disability Justice

The Oseh RDEI Committee will be exploring these resources and their integration with our congregational policies and practices. Please join us and share your voice as we seek higher levels of inclusion across our congregation.

**[RJ Social Media](#)**: In observance of JDAIM, on its social media, Reconstructing Judaism is showcasing how Reconstructionist communities are working to create more inclusive and accessible spaces for everyone. For example, the **[RJ Facebook page](#)** has recent posts highlighting what several communities across the country are doing, including one about the installation of the "speed table" at Oseh Shalom. We can learn from what other communities are doing.