Arlene Goldstein Berger

Arlene grew up in Providence, RI, the eldest of four sisters. She was raised in a nonobservant home, attended services at a Conservative shul and learned at an Orthodox day school. Arlene received a Bachelor of Arts in human services from Simmons College and a Master of Business Administration, a Master of Social Work and a certificate in gerontology from Boston College. After working for 15 years in social work and aging, volunteering as a Jewish family life educator, leading services, and studying Jewish text, Arlene decided it was time to enter rabbinical school.

While at RRC, Arlene served as student rabbi at Or Haneshamah: Ottawa’s Reconstructionist Community in Ontario, Canada; Reconstructionist congregation Havurat Tikvah in Charlotte, NC; and Farmington Valley Jewish Congregation-Emek Shalom in Simsbury, CT. She also has served as education director of the Bethesda–Chevy Chase Jewish Community Group in Rockville, MD.

Arlene is blessed by the matriarchs and patriarchs that have been in her life. She learned unconditional love from Bea, lifelong learning from Marion, silent strength from Helen, overflowing kindness from Mollie, the definition of eyshet chayil from Fran, and forgiveness from Harriett. She learned humor from Frank, patience from Sidney, dependability from Larry, and serenity from George.

Special thanks must be given to her spiritual family at Tikvat Israel Congregation in Rockville, MD. It takes a kehillah kedoshah to raise a rabbah!

Arlene’s greatest blessing comes from nearly 30 years with her husband, Warren, and their two amazing children, Jennie and Alex. They have been her hevrutahs and her biggest supporters. Without their love she would not be where or who she is today.

Woh betzinei lehabim veha’shalom, leishmu lealamot, leishmu lealamot, leishmu lealamot, leishmu lealamot.

At ol dedri lehalom horotk ba’ahaba.

Place in our hearts the ability to understand and to discern, to hear, to learn, to teach, to keep, to do and to uphold with love all that we study of Your Torah.

—Ahavah Rabbah, Shakharit service

Being Jewish means that I value the past, live in the present, and plan for the future. I look at what is unique and beautiful in Jewish tradition, listen carefully to how it speaks to us as individuals, and then transform it to be distinctively modern, yet definitely Jewish.

As a rabbah, my goal is to help people engage the Judaism within them so that it marries faith, knowledge, obligation and action and informs their lives in a tangible way. My rabbinate is built upon the notion that there are many paths to being Jewish. For Judaism to succeed, we must all learn to live together with ahavah (love), binah (understanding) and kavod (honor/respect).