

Sheindlia Krishtal



Me, Sheindlia Krishtal. Photo taken for the Board of Honor at the Ukrainian Association of Blind People. Kiev, 1996.

I worked as editor at the technical information department of the Ministry of Timber and Logging on Kreschatik Street, the main street in Kiev. I toured all the forestries in Ukraine, including those in the Carpathian Mountains. When I was about 50 I fainted at a meeting and was sent to a neurological clinic. My eyesight became worse. I became third category invalid. At 51 I was reclassified and placed in the 2nd category. This gave me the right to retire early. When my condition improved I continued to write as a part-time correspondent and worked at the Ukrainian Association of Blind People. I worked 39 years in total.

In 1995 my husband and I received a two-room apartment in the Kharkovskiy neighborhood in the outskirts of Kiev. My son and his family live in our old apartment. We were so happy to get this apartment, but Sasha didn't last long afterward - he passed away in 1996. We buried him at Lesnoy cemetery - there are no Jewish corners there. Fira died one year later. She was buried in the Jewish corner near her parents' grave.

In 1996 I visited Israel. I enjoyed my stay there and admired the beauty of the country, but I never thought of leaving Kiev - my home, my friends and my job. I met with my relatives - they are well settled. I am happy for Faina - Bella likes it there. They live in Kiriat-Ono near Tel-Aviv. I saw Faina for the last time - she passed away 4 years ago.

I am very happy that my son lives in Kiev and often comes to see me. Lilia and Bella call from Israel. I often call my former colleagues, but I feel lonely in this place without my husband. It is hard for me to go outside. I receive packaged food every month from Hesed. They arrange lectures and concerts in Hesed, but I can't go there by bus - I get sick. Many Jews of my age have returned

to Jewish traditions: they attend synagogue and celebrate Jewish holidays. I take an interest in Jewish culture and history, but I don't go to the synagogue; my husband and I didn't attend synagogue; it was difficult for us to change our attitudes.

I receive 59 hrivna of pension and my son supports me. I like to take care of the house myself. My friends visit me every now and then and we discuss the latest news. Life goes on.