

Faina Volper With Her Friends



Faina Volper (second on the right) and my friends from Hesed at the literature club in Hesed. On my right is Seraphima Gurevich, a doctor from Hesed. Photo made in Chernovtsy in 2000.

My husband and I celebrated all Jewish holidays, even though I grew up an atheist. School propaganda had its impact on my outlooks. However, my mother inspired love of Jewish traditions in me and I understand that it is my identity. My husband never cared about traditions, though. I don't think he grew up in a religious family. The environment where a person grows is very important, I think.

My husband didn't mind my observing Jewish traditions. I fasted at Yom Kippur and we celebrated Pesach at home. Of course, we didn't follow all rules. I didn't have special utensils for Pesach and we had bread at home. But on the first 2 or 3 days we only had matzah. After my mother died I began to buy matzah at the local synagogue. We also celebrated Soviet holidays. We had good friends - a Jewish family and always enjoyed having a good time with them. We got together on holidays to sing and dance and play games. We also celebrated New Year with them. We went skiing and had lots of fun.

My husband Yuri Milrud died on 14 January 2001. I buried him beside my son and in accordance with Jewish tradition. I live alone. My son calls me every day and visits me. I also have friends and made new friends at Hesed.

In the recent ten years many things have changed in the Jewish life here. I go to Hesed every Monday. We have a gathering of elderly Jews at 11 o'clock. On Wednesday I attend a literature studio. I also attend a vocal studio. We sing songs in Hebrew, Yiddish and Russian. I like singing and I feel happy when I sing. Singing inspires me and makes me forget my sorrows and problems. My husband and I used to sing Jewish and Soviet songs. We get Jewish songs typed in Russian font to be able to read. Now, when I sing, he seems to be near me. We feel like a family in Hesed. We celebrate birthdays, Shabbat and Jewish holidays. I am glad this time has come.