

Elizabeth Waiser



I, Elizabeth Waiser, nee Braverman. Photo made for my passport in Chernovtsy in 2000.

In 1970s many Jews were moving from the USSR and my husband and I were thinking about it. We decided to stay. We were born here and grew up in this country. Members of our family were buried here. We decided to stay and live our life here. Not all Jews live in Israel. Of course, it was our dream to visit Israel, but we could never afford it.

My husband and I came from religious families. We always believed in God like our parents taught us. We observed all Jewish traditions in our family. We fasted before Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and celebrated Pesach. I was a good housewife and had all traditional food made on holidays. I cooked Gefilte fish like my mother taught me. We worked at Shabbat, because Saturday was a working day. But I always cooked on Friday. In the evening my husband and I prayed and I lit candles and only then we sat down to dinner. On holidays my husband and I went to the synagogue. We didn't go to synagogue on Saturday. My husband and I spoke Yiddish and Russian at home. We spoke Russian to our son, but he has heard Yiddish since he was a baby and so he learned it himself. We also celebrated Soviet holidays and got together with our neighbors in the yard. We sang Soviet songs and went to parades.

My son died in 1996. My husband and I buried him at the Jewish corner of the town cemetery and installed a gravestone on his grave. After my son's funeral I was overwhelmed with grief. I fell at home and broke my arm. My husband was taking care of me. I was a happy wife, because I only heard words of love from my husband. David was a very good husband and father. In a year I fell another time and broke my hip. I've been confined to bed for 4 years. In January 2001 my husband had an infarction. When he was dying in the reanimation unit he said "I mustn't die. My dearest wife is at home. She is an invalid and can't walk". His grave is beside my son's grave. My husband was a very good, decent and nice man. He didn't smoke or drink. He loved his family, his son and wife. He loved his sister and loved people. My husband's sister Haya lives with me. She is 87. She can't hear or see.

If it were not for the assistance of Hesed and Jewish Charity Committee I would be desperate. A nurse from Hesed comes to help me. She is a wonderful woman. She cleans my room and washes me. I get meals from Hesed. At Shabbat Hesed sends me a hala and dinner. Volunteers come to help me stand and walk. They read me Jewish magazines and newspapers and tell me news. They help me to overcome the feeling of loneliness. I know that there is somebody to bury me when I die. They've become my family.