

## Agnessa Margolina



This is a picture of me, taken in Uzhgorod in 2000. I never joined the Communist Party, but I was a Soviet person with a Soviet mentality. When Jews began to move to Israel in the 1970s I was indignant about it. Of course, I didn't even consider this option. I couldn't understand my acquaintances or friends that submitted their documents to obtain a permit for departure. I didn't know how they could leave their country to go to Israel where everything was so different. I also felt negative about perestroika. I thought it was wrong and that private entrepreneurship was not a good idea and there could be no capitalism in our country. Later a change for the better became obvious. The fall of the Iron Curtain, which separated the USSR from the rest of the world, was one example of such improvement. In 1999 Hesed was established in Uzhgorod. This organization supports the revival of the Jewish way of life in Ukraine. We, old people, are very happy about it. When we retire we have to face loneliness and helplessness. We suffer much about lack of communication. Hesed has changed this situation. Volunteers visit old people and talk to them. They deliver delicious food to us. There are clubs in Hesed. They have interesting programs and we can get together there. Every Sunday we attend performances of the drama studio of Hesed. They stage Sholem Aleichem plays. I like theater and enjoy every performance to the utmost. We celebrate Jewish traditions in Hesed. I've become closer to Jewish traditions and am happy about it. I speak Yiddish with my new friends at Hesed. It's very pleasant for me. I'm very much interested in such things. I have a visiting nurse at home. She's become close to me. She brings me Jewish

newspapers and magazines from Hesed. I have new friends and my life has become full, thanks to Hesed.