

## Ella Perlman And Her Friends



This photo was taken in the gym of our society of Jewish culture. I am in the center. I don't know the surnames of the other ladies. The one on the left is Maria, and the one on the right is Dora. This photo was taken in Riga in 2002.

I've lived alone since my husband died in 1997. My older daughter Bertha, her husband and sons often come to see me. My friends visit me. I participate in the Jewish life in Riga, and I find it very interesting. I go to the synagogue every day. It's become a necessity for me. I've made quite a few friends in the community. I have friends in the choir, in the gym and those I talk to, when we get together with out rebetzen. She tells me stories about the history and traditions of the Jewish people. We discuss whatever Jewish news we've read in newspapers and share all kinds of news. Thanks to this society I read Jewish newspapers and magazines from France and USA.

I look forward to our choir rehearsals. Each meeting is a holiday for us. Old and ill people sing in the choir, but when they start singing, they look young and happy. One lady in the choir is blind. She is 86, and her daughter takes her to the choir rehearsals. The daughter also sings in the choir. Both have beautiful voices. Both attend all rehearsals. Some of those I started singing with have passed away. Old age and diseases have no mercy. However, we are like one family. We visit and support people, if they fall ill. We also remember the deceased ones. When I visit my husband and parents' graves, I also bring flowers to put them on the graves of our deceased choir members. Many of them had no relatives left to visit their graves.

The Rahamim social center supports me a lot. They pay my heating bills during the heating season. They also provide medications that are very expensive here. I also have medical insurance for free. The synagogue bought me two trips to the recreation center. I had free treatment and massages there. This is all very important, considering that the pension is not sufficient to cover all expenses. It's also very important for me to know that I've not been abandoned and that there are people remembering and caring about me.