

Rachil Lemberg With Her Son Anatoli Stepanov



This is a photo of me with my son Anatoli Stepanov during his visit from the USA. This photo was taken in my apartment in Uzhhorod, Ukraine, in 1998.

Before I retired in 1977 I worked to work at the Giprograd Design Institute. My husband and I were atheists and our children were raised like all other Soviet children knowing nothing about religion. We tried to spend as much time with our children as possible. In the evening our family dined together. My husband and I discussed what happened at work during a day and our children spoke about their school. On weekends we went for walks or out of town, to the woods or to the riverbank. We spent vacations in the Crimea or picturesque spots of Subcarpathia. We celebrated Soviet holidays at home. Our favorite holidays were New Year and Victory Day. We also celebrated the Soviet Army Day since Yevgeni was a military. We had guests in the evening and I cooked for these parties. We also invited friends to birthday parties. We talked and danced. Yevgeni and I went to school concerts on Soviet holidays.

My husband died in 1998. Since then I've lived with my daughter and granddaughter. In 1999 Hesed was established in Uzhhorod. It's hard to imagine our life without Hesed now. These people do so much good. I am grateful to all Jews who care about us across the world! They support us a lot. They particularly care about older people and I can feel their care. I receive food packages. They pick my laundry and send a doctor to visit me. They also provide medications. I receive Jewish newspapers for free. They celebrate Jewish holidays and birthdays in Hesed. Unfortunately, I cannot attend these events in Hesed due to my health condition. Other people call me to tell me what's new. Hesed has given me an opportunity to socialize with people. It's very important for me. I've never been religious and I won't become one. This is alien and strange to me, but I am interested in the Jewish history and culture and I read books about this.

Our son preferred sciences. After finishing school Yevgeni entered the Faculty of Physics and Mathematic of Uzhhorod University. He did well at the University. Before graduation Anatoli got an offer for postgraduate studies, but he decided to go to work to gain experience. Anatoli married Greta Shalamanovich, a Jewish girl from Uzhhorod, born in 1956. In 1975 my first grandson Victor was born. Anatoli's daughter Renata was born in 1982.

In 1990 Greta's family decided to move to the USA. My son also decided to move there. Of course, I was afraid of parting with him and my grandchildren, but I understood that my son had the right to decide for himself. He lives in Island Park in New Jersey. He and his wife work. Anatoli lectures at the University and his colleagues value him high. My son and grandson often call me. I am very happy for them. In 1998 my son visited me. It was a great joy for me. My son stayed here for almost a month. He told me about his life and family and showed photographs. Regretfully, I couldn't travel to visit them due to my health condition.