

Bella Chanina With Her Husband Grigoriy Chanin



This is me with my husband Grigoriy Chanin. This photo was taken in Kishinev in 1998. I received guests on Purim being mistress of the 'Warm House.' There were balloons decorating our apartment. This was the end of the party, the guests had left, and a representative of Joint photographed Grigoriy and me before taking his leave.

The life of pensioners became much worse after perestroika. Personal pensions were cancelled, and I lost all the benefits. We spent a bigger part of our pensions on our apartment fees and medications, as we were growing older and sickly. However, freedom was granted that didn't exist before and we can talk about the rebirth of the Jewish life in Kishinev. At first we started a Jewish library and now it is our community center. There was a club of pensioners opened in the library and I became one of its first members in 1993. I also began to work as a volunteer in Yehuda, a charity organization in the Hesed. In 1997 I became mistress of the warm house. I am fond of this work. We celebrate all the Jewish holidays and I try to do everything in accordance with Jewish traditions. For example, on Pesach I put on the plate of each attendant four pieces of matzah, with a napkin between them, an egg, horseradish and potatoes, everything that traditions require. Young people from the Hillel, an organization for young people, visit us. Considering my age, it's getting harder to manage my duties of the mistress of the warm house, but this activity supports me a lot. A few years ago I went to the synagogue on Sunday afternoon. There was a club conducted by Rabbi Zalman-Leib Abelskiy. The club is still there, but I can't attend it due to my health condition. Hesed delivers a food package to me every month. A few months ago my

husband died. It was his will to be buried at the Jewish part in the cemetery 'Doina,' but not according to the Jewish ritual - and so I did it.