

## **Ignac Neubauer's Wife Lubov Neubauer, Grandson Robert Shyfris, Daughter Marina Shyfris And Niece Yudita**



This is my family: from left to right: my wife Lubov Neubauer, my grandson Robert, my daughter Marina, my niece Yudita, my sister Hermina's daughter. This photograph was taken during my niece's visiting us, when she arrived in Uzhgorod from Israel in 1996.

In 1968 our daughter Marina was born. We gave her the Jewish name of Meita after my wife's mother, who had died one year before our daughter was born. Our children studied at school and were pioneers and Komsomol members. I didn't mind this. They were growing up in this country and it was better for them to be no different from others. Still my wife and I told our children about Jewish traditions and Jewish history, but we also told them to not discuss this with anybody else. We celebrated Jewish holidays at home. I didn't go to the synagogue, but I prayed at home. I had a tallit, a tefillin and a prayer book. After finishing school my daughter entered the Faculty of Russian Philology of Uzhgorod University. Upon graduation she failed to find a job by her specialty. This didn't have anything to do with her being a Jew. This was during the period of perestroika, when anti-Semitism receded. It was just that there were not so many schools in Uzhgorod and there were no job vacancies. During her studies Marina got married. Her husband Leonid Shyfris, a Jewish man, also works as a cabdriver like my son. Leonid was born in Uzhgorod in 1953, his parents moved to Subcarpathia from the USSR after the war. The only language they knew was Russian. Marina and Leonid speak Russian at home. He graduated from the Lvov Polytechnic University, but an engineer's salary was too low to support the family. In 1988 my grandson Robert, Marina's son, was born. Marina and her family live with me. When in 1999 Hesed was established in Uzhgorod, Marina went to work there. She was chief of literature studio there. Now Marina is expecting the second baby. She doesn't work.

When after the breakup of the USSR [1991] Ukraine gained independence I was hoping for a better life. Ukraine is a rich country: it has fruitful lands and natural deposits. There are good reserves requiring effective management, but I don't see it happening. Life is more difficult than it was during the Soviet rule. My heart squeezes when I see comely old women digging in garbage pans looking for food leftovers. Fortunately, Hesed provides assistance to us, Jews. Old people can have free meals in the Hesed canteen and Hesed delivers meals to those who cannot leave their homes. We also receive food packages and clothes. I've been invited to this canteen many times, but I prefer my own cooking. It's not bragging on my part, but many housewives ask me for my recipes of traditional Jewish cuisine. My daughter's family likes my cooking as well. I've had two infarctions and several serious surgeries. Hesed helps me with medications and I can consult a doctor from Hesed. When my wife was ill, Hesed also helped us. A visiting nurse from Hesed came to look after her and we received all necessary medications. Lubov died in 2003. Hesed helped us with funeral arrangements. My wife was buried in the Jewish sector of the town cemetery in Uzhgorod. There was a Jewish funeral. The rabbi of the Uzhgorod synagogue conducted the ceremony.

Hesed takes great efforts to revive the Jewry of Subcarpathia. There clubs where Jews of all ages study Hebrew and Jewish religion and traditions. My grandson also studies there. Besides, he is a member of the club for Jewish youngsters in Hesed. There are clubs of foreign languages, a literature studio, a choir and dance studio. Young people begin to attend the synagogue and we are very happy about it.