TRIP REPORT
MAY 8 – 23, 2019
JUDY PATKIN, DEBBIE KARDON,
GALINA ZILBERSTEIN, BARBARA KARCHMER

Warm House in Lubny, Ukraine. Standing in rear is Yakov Sidelkovsky and seated on the right, left to right, are Judy Patkin, Galina Zilberstein, Barbara Karchmer and Debbie Kardon. Left front is Boris Rudman, Adopt-a-Bubbe coordinator in Lubny.

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COMMENTS

Although the roads in Ukraine are still in terrible shape, we saw road crews out repairing and occasionally replacing roads full of large potholes. Drivers wander over the whole road trying to find a safe flat surface. Many miles of connecting roads are only two lanes wide – one lane in each direction. Even large trucks are on these roads, so they must be main routes between cities. As you approach Dnipro or Cherkassy, there are four lane divided highways, but they are few and far between.

We visited several older people who had fled the 2014 war which Putin began in eastern Ukraine. There is still fighting and dying going on in the villages near Donetsk, so there is no incentive to return. Many fled in a hurry with few possessions and they are struggling to begin life again. Putin is in no hurry to end the war. Brand new President Volodymyr Zelensky has promised to do what he can to bring it to an end.

The Ukrainian economy is still in terrible shape. People complain about the rising cost of food. Even common items like potatoes and onions have recently doubled and tripled in price. Before the Maidan revolution, which began in 2014, we used to exchange 8 hrv. to the American dollar. Now the exchange rate is over 26 hrv. to the dollar. That means the pensions the elderly depend upon have lost 2/3 of their value. People are disgusted. President Volodymyr Zelensky, an unknown comedian, won the election with 73% of the vote. President Petro Poroshenko’s percentage of the vote was in the low 20’s. Everyone wants an end to corruption. People are so fed up with President Poroshenko’s corruption that sales of his famous Roshen candy are now in second place behind sales of a Millenium brand of candy.
I. Friday, May 10, 2019 - Kamenskoe - former Dniprodzerzhinsk and Dnipro
   A. Met with principal of Jewish Day School and teacher - Tatyana Mikhailovna. Tatyana taught for 26 years in a boarding school where parents were unhappy (neglected children?). She is also the director of the Jewish community. Rabbi Levi and Dina Stambler take care of every Jew. They come to the synagogue with their own problems. The synagogue has a lot of different programs.

   She spoke about the program we would be attending marking the end of WWII - May 9th, 74 years ago. Eighty-nine individuals are considered children of the war if they were born between 1941 and 1945. There are four actual veterans. They are generally in their 90’s now. One famous veteran is a former surgeon, Dr. Isaack Yakovlevich Dubrovsky, who is 95 and still active. He comes most days to the synagogue to study. If they are unable to bring him, he calls and asks for books to be sent to him for study.

   The Jewish population of Kamenskoe is approximately 3,000. They don’t know the exact number. Between 250 and 300 come to the synagogue on special occasions. People are leaving because the economic situation is not good. Most go to Israel and some to Europe.

   B. We joined the audience in the school dining hall for the veteran’s program. Dr. Dubrovsky was sitting in the front with all his medals next Rabbi Levi Stambler. They had several small groups of children speak or perform and also short videos. There was a group of men who sang to the accompaniment of an accordion, and members of the audience joined in with songs from the Russian army. The Rabbi spoke. Yakov Sidelkovsky spoke. They called up veterans and children of the war one at a time to receive a flower, a bag of food and a special greeting card.

   C. We left with our Adopt-a-Bubbe coordinator, Elena Lyanguzova for two visits with clients. Elena said she now has 14 clients. This number seems small for such a large Jewish population and I wonder if I heard her correctly.

      1. Mira Israelevna Golbreich turned 90 today. She was born May 10, 1929. Her family had planned a party for her, but she is bedridden and not feeling well so no big party. Mira was born in Novomoskovsk, a small city near Dnipro. In 2014 the family relocated from...
Luhansk (within the war zone) to Kamenskoe. Misha, a cousin, brought the whole family from Luhansk and even paid for an ambulance to move Mira. Mira was bedridden when she arrived from Luhansk. An apartment was rented and that’s where she is. Her niece, Vera Israelevna, came with her and lives nearby and helps out. Chesed provides patronnage service 24 hours day and night, which is very unusual. Misha lives in Dnipro and is a successful businessman. Vera is divorced. She taught math at a Jewish Day School for 18 years. Mira used to teach history at a college or junior college level.

Mira’s hand and right arm are badly injured which they said was due to a psychotic episode - no further explanation. She also has gangrene in her legs. She is very hard of hearing and Adopt-a-Bubbe had helped with a hearing aid, but she no longer uses it. They spend 1,500 - 2,000 hrv. ($58 - $77)/week on medicine. Mira’s pension is 5,000 hrv. ($192)/month, which is high. It’s because her late husband worked in the mines. She also receives 800 hrv. ($31)/month on Chesed’s SmartCard for food shopping. Adopt-a-Bubbe left a package with five oranges, three lemons and a bunch of bananas.

1. The second visit was with two sisters - Donya and Sonya Becker. Donya is 88 years old and bedridden. The explanation was that she had fallen in March, didn’t break anything, but no longer gets out of bed. She just stopped walking. She sleeps with pampers. Sonya is 91, can walk, and was sitting on her bed in another room. Sonya pees into a bowl at night and can’t take care of herself. They have five patronnage workers who come during the day. We met one worker, Natasha, who had already been there for 3½ hours and would leave soon for her next client. The apartment is very messy and smells terrible. Food is left lying around and clothing and pots are everywhere.

We visited these sisters a couple of years ago and the apartment was a terrible mess then. Donya used to shout and boss Sonya around, but she is more docile since she stays in bed. Sonya never said a word and didn’t on this visit either. They have no family. Neither one ever married. Their father died fighting in the war in Hungary. There is no one to help out other than the Chesed patronnage workers. It’s a sad way to live out one’s years. Adopt-a-Bubbe left fresh fruit and small containers of yogurt for them.

D. We went next to the home of Vera Mikhailovna Soyenko, who hosts the Warm House. The Warm House members were at the WWII commemoration, so we were served lunch just for the eight of us. Vera has hosted the Warm House for 11 years. She was originally asked by the rabbi’s wife, Dina
Stambler, and Ira, our former Adopt-a-Bubbe coordinator. There are usually eight or nine people who gather. Vera is a wonderful cook and served a grand collection of salads, fish, new potatoes, chicken, dessert and a special dish called a bride salad. Debbie took down her recipe for the Bride salad and Galina took her recipe for chicken.

Vera’s pension is 2,680 hrv./month or $100 - not much for expenses similar to those in the U.S. for food and medicine. She taught first grade and then went to the university in Kiev to study history. She taught history in high school for 10 years and later went back to teaching young children. She recently changed her heating system to electric heat. Under the old system, the temperature was usually 11 - 12 degrees Celsius (54 degrees Fahrenheit) - in other words cold. Now it is 21 degrees Celsius (70 degrees Fahrenheit). She pays 200 hrv. ($8) /month for heat. In April it was 200 - 250 hrv. ($8 - $10). Because she has a very low pension, she qualified for a subsidy of 700 hrv. ($27) /month from the government. It used to come as a credit, but now it is paid directly to Vera. She pays 780 hrv. ($30) /month for all utilities - heat, gas and water.

Vera’s older son, Sergey, is deputy director of the prison system in Kameneskoe. His son, Vitaly, also works at the prison as a guard. Vitaly served in 2015 in the war in the east. A younger son is 42 and lives in Israel. He is unmarried.

E. We returned to Dnipro to get ready for Shabbat dinner with Rabbi Shmuel and Chany Kaminezki. Ann and David Levin are visiting, so we will see them there and their friends, Karen and Carl Lieberman. They are in Dnipro for a couple of days and then travel to Poland. Ann has been to Dnipro several times as lay leader of the Boston Kehillah project, but it’s a first time for Karen and Carl.

Shabbat dinner was amazing. Chany and Rabbi Kaminezki were very welcoming. Risha Kaminezki, who married about a year ago, was there with her husband and new baby, a few months old. Her husband (I forget his name, but he is from France) has been assigned to another part of Dnipro to open a synagogue for young professionals, which is where they will go from her parent’s home. He seemed like a nice young rabbi and should do well. The couple had been in New York while he studied.

Janna who hosts one of the two Warm Houses in Dnipro was there. She is a lovely person and a good cook, too. Her house is right around the corner from the Kaminezki home. She grew up in that same house. Her son, Genya, was also there. Rabbi Kaminezki said that an uncle, who was an army officer, guarded her home during the war, so it survived intact when Janna returned from the evacuation further east. Another neighbor was there - Marina, who married an American and lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, but is moving to Philadelphia soon where there is a larger Jewish community. She comes to Dnipro to visit family. Her son was also there. Rabbi Kaminezki introduced Marina to her husband over 30 years ago when he came to Dnipro on business.

Because it is May, Shabbat dinner began late - around 9:30 P.M. and we didn’t leave until well after midnight. There were many salads and courses to taste - each one delicious and healthy. There were also several toasts with vodka and whisky. It was a special evening with around 30 guests seated at the table. Conversation never lapsed. We even discussed the measles epidemic in Ukraine. Chany said that they had had an outbreak of measles a year ago in the Yeshiva, but didn’t have many cases this year. Barbara Karchmer had found out that Ukraine has the highest number of measles cases in Europe - 25,000. Because the economy is so poor, they are no longer vaccinating. Of course we also talked about the new Jewish president of Ukraine - Zelensky. Rabbi Kaminezki has been sending him comments from the Torah since he spoke with him.
II. Saturday, May 11, 2019. Shabbat in Dnipro and leave for Smela. We’ll be staying overnight in Smela, Cherkassy and Lubny for the next few days as we continue our Adopt-a-Bubbe visits. Arkady Zolotonogov’s wife is a patronnage worker for Chesed in Smela. He said they have around 11 patronnage workers in the city.

A. Met Arkady Zolotonogov and went to the first Adopt-a-Bubbe home visit with Anna Leibovna Grishenko, born in 1932. She lives with her son, Gennady Grishenko, born in 1961. Anna was born on Sholom Aleichem Street in Smela. Gennady was also born in Smela. Arkady told us that Smela used to be a Jewish shtetl. Anna takes medicine for high blood pressure and she immediately took some pills. She said she takes many pills a day. Her blood pressure was 128/88, which is quite good, but sometimes it goes up to 170. Gennady is classified as Disabled Class II. He has prostate and kidney trouble and his back hurts. Anna began working at age 15 in a clothing factory. She even made parachutes from silk. When they received clothing from those killed in the war, they took it apart and made new clothes.

Anna’s pension is 1,800 hrv.($69)/month. It used to be 1,600 hrv. ($62)/month. She spends 800 hrv.($31)/month for medicine. She has a SmartCard from the Joint which holds 2,100 hrv. ($81)/every three months. She said that 10 heart pills cost 100 hrv. ($4). They also purchased a gauge for measuring blood pressure for 1,200 hrv.($46). Chesed sends a patronnage worker every week for four hours a day to shop, cook and clean. Gennady has a disability pension of 1,800 hrv. ($69)/month. They have a credit subsidy for gas and electricity for 680 hrv.($26)/month. They own their own apartment. They heat with coal. They owe money for repairs for their home. Anna said that without the Jewish community she couldn’t survive.

Left to right: Galina Zilberstein & Anna Leibovna Grishenko

B. Our second home visit in Smela was with Alla Alexandrovna Rabinov Golsina, who was born in 1937. She is 82 years old. Her parents moved from Moldova to Smela, where Alla was born. Alla worked in agricultural research in Nikolaev and graduated from the Institute there in 1960. She is an agronomist and has several degrees, including teaching. Alla worked for 38 ½ years in Nikolaev. Her daughter, Larissa, tried to get into medical school for five years and was turned down because she was Jewish. She eventually studied dentistry and she and her husband moved to Germany 19 years ago. Larissa comes to visit twice a year in Smela. Larissa is divorced and has no children. She practices dentistry in Germany.

We had to explain to Alla who we were. Yakov explained to her that we represented an organization in Boston and the food package she received came from us.

Left to right: Debbie Kardon, Alla Alexandrovna Rabinov Golsina, Arkady Zolotonogov (Adopt-a-Bubbe coordinator in Smela)
In 1941 when Alla was four years old, she was evacuated with her mother and younger sister, Raya, who was 2½ years old. Her mother held the baby and had a backpack and Alla held onto her skirt. They left just two days before Germany invaded. Her father was a soldier. Her grandmother and grandfather couldn’t evacuate and were pointed out by a neighbor as Jews, taken to Smela’s Babi Yar and shot. Every May 9 they go to that place and put flowers on the site. They don’t know the date, but it was probably in early October. They were evacuated to Stalingrad oblast and after the battle went to Saratov on the Volga River. She remembers some details. Her mother was 30 years old. They lived in a forest farm house and her Mom worked in security. There were many hungry wolves in the forest and her mother took a metal bar and made a lot of noise to chase the wolves away while she and her sister hid in the house. Raya now lives in Netanya and has two sons. Raya graduated from the Kiev Polytechnic Institute as a heating engineer. She is 78 years old and still works in Netanya as a patronnage worker taking care of a younger woman.

Alla received 2,500 euros from the German Claims Conference. Her sister did, too. Yakov said that Tanya’s mother also received German Claims Conference money.

Alla had three surgeries in Cherkassy for colon cancer. The first surgery was to remove the cancer. The second was to place a temporary colostomy bag to the outside. The third was to remove the colostomy drainage. She still has a hernia from these surgeries. Each surgery cost 10,000 - 12,000 hrv. ($385 - $462). She sold her sister’s apartment to pay for it. Because she couldn’t pay for it all at once, she is still paying back on credit.

Alla’s pension is 2,000 hrv. ($77)/month, but it is not enough to pay for repairs to her home. They use coal for heat. Alla collects rain water outside in a large cauldron and used it in her garden. She considers it very clean. Alla has a SmartCard from Chesed for 7,000 hrv. ($269) every three months. It’s a high amount because she is a child Holocaust survivor. She takes medication for hypertension every day. The upper number can be 170 or 180. She used to have low blood pressure when she was young.

III. Sunday, May 12, 2019 - travel to Cherkassy
Visit with Rabbi Dov and Chany Axelrad at their apartment. Chany had a group of older women for Torah study around the dining room table.

Above left: Rabbi Dov Axelrad with his son, Levi. Above right: Women around the table studying Torah. At the head of the table are Rabbi Axelrad and Yakov Sidelkovsky.

1. Three of the Axelrad children were at home. Levi is 11 and studies on the Internet, Devorah is at the Jewish Day School and Menuhah is a teenager. An older daughter just got married this spring and is pregnant and due in the summer. The couple lives in Kiryat Gat, Israel, and were affected by the recent rocket fire from Gaza. The bridegroom is French.
2. Cherkassy has approximately 5,000 Jews. Around 150 came for the Pesach Seder. The Jewish Day School has 15 children. However, there are 15 in the kindergarten, so there is growth. Although families are leaving for Israel, there are still Jews coming into the Jewish community, so the numbers are fairly stable.

3. They also have a new program called SmartJ which is for children who attend other public schools. They come Monday through Thursday between 2:00 and 6:00 P.M. Some of these children have begun to transfer into the Jewish Day School because they find it much more stable. There is no swearing or fighting and they enjoy the learning. The program includes computers, English, Jewish holidays and art. Children are between six and 15 years old and are divided into two groups. This year they closed the 6th grade because students had immigrated to Israel, but then students from SmartJ asked to be in 6th grade. They were told it would open up again next year. Cars are hired to get the SmartJ children to the program.

4. Alla Kapustina was one of the women who were studying Torah. She was our original Adopt-a-Bubbe coordinator in Cherkassy for a number of years. She is caring for her older sister who is 95, so is not able to attend many events. Alla looked good. Everyone around the table was born in Cherkassy. Chany introduced them and they each spoke a little about themselves. Yakov, Judy, Debbie and Barbara each spoke to the group.

B. Adopt-a-Bubbe home visit with Tamarova Fainovna Nazarova, who was born in 1923 in Kiev. She worked in the far northeast in Magadan as a typist for 11 years. She is no longer married.

When the war began, she was evacuated from Rostov oblast - a town called Vershinskaya. Tamarova went with a close friend and the friend’s parents and brother. Her own mother and grandfather couldn’t leave and were taken to Kiev’s Babi Yar and shot on the way. She hardly knew her father and Tamarova was an only child. She worked on a Kolkhoz (collective farm) until she found work as a secretary in a finance department. Her friend’s father came from the front and found another place for his daughter to do military translation work, so Tamarova went to Saratov on her own in 1942. In Saratov she worked in a military factory until she moved to another job sorting aviation parts, which she said was very important work. She stayed on until 1947.

At age 24 she went to Magadan and was very happy there. She was a typist for a city food organization. She found the job through an ad in a paper. Magadan was a closed city. She married and had one son. Her husband divorced her when the boy was 10 months old. She moved to another job where she inspected new hires and stayed in that position for 37 years. In 1993 she left Kremenskorsk and came to Cherkassy because her son moved there. She has two grandsons. One grandson went to Roitengen, Germany, with his family more than 20 years ago. The daughter-in-law’s mother also stayed behind, but this woman died. Tamarova has no desire to emigrate. She talks by phone with her son every day.

Tamarova’s pension is 6,247 hrv. ($240)/month. It is very high because she worked in the far northeast for so long and earned hardship benefits. She received German Claims Conference funds of 2,500 euros and gave it to her son. She said she has enough and is fine. She has a SmartCard from Cheshed with 3,000 hrv. ($115)/every 3 months. Yakov said that people who work in the far north often receive salaries three times higher and get higher pensions and more vacation time - often 6 - 8 months a year.
Adopt-a-Bubbe gave her a metal teapot, bananas and apples.

C. Adopt-a-Bubbe visit with Valentina Nikolaevna Kachik, born in 1933. Valentina is bedridden. Valentina never married and she lives alone. She has no relatives in Cherkassy. The wife of her brother lives in Israel and there are two nephews. One is disabled with epilepsy and a younger nephew lives in Ashdod.

Valentina Nikolaevna Kachik

She fell two years ago and also has sclerosis (hardening of the arteries) and scoliosis. She hurt her hip when she fell, but claims nothing was broken. Valentina used to teach Russian language and literature in high school. She has difficulty with her eyes, but does not have cataracts. She said that her glasses were not quite right.

At the beginning of the war, they saw airplanes in the sky with Nazi swastikas on the side. She was nine years old. People panicked and ran around. They lived in a small town near Cherkassy. Her mother, father, brother and Valentina ran to the train station and got on a train to Vinnitsa oblast. From there they got a horse and cart to Kursk to a German colony. People who lived there were taken east. In 1943, Cherkassy was liberated and they returned. Her father was wounded. They lived in a temporary house near her father’s work place until they found more permanent housing.

Valentina’s pension is 2,600 hrv. ($100/month). She said she is covered for medicine and food. The government gives her 1,780 hrv. ($68/month). She owns half the house and heats with gas. She is on several medications for her heart and hypertension. She has patronnage service from Chesed during the week, but cannot afford to pay for weekend help. Valentina’s parting words were that she wanted to be buried next to her mother.

Adopt-a-Bubbe gave her a gift of chicken, sour cream, butter, cheese, candy and a green bucket.

D. Cherkassy Warm House

We went to the apartment of Mila Ganapolskaya’s sister, Bella and Bella’s husband Viktor for the Warm House. The table was piled with food - gefulte fish, many salads, mashed potatoes and beef, herring, bread and several desserts. Of course there were toasts with two types of vodka and wine. Here are the guests around the table:

1. Galina Mikhailovna Polskaya, born in Cherkassy in 1941. Her mother stayed in the occupied city with Galina and two more babies. Her father was sent to the front. Galina was born at home. When her mother went to register the birth, she was given two different birth dates a week apart.

2. Dina Vladimirovna Fidorsaya was born May 24, 1929 in Smolenska oblast. Her father was a military officer before the war. When he came back from the front, he brought them to Cherkassy. Her father died in 1959 from heart failure two months before he turned 60. Dina taught math at the university. She was married for five years and divorced, and raised two sons. One son died. The other son works as a translator with French, Dutch, German and Russian.

3. David Litishefsky was born in Novosibirsk in 1949. The family is from Vinnitsa in western Ukraine. His father went through the entire war and the war with Finland. They went to Novosibirsk after the war. His father realized that the family in Vinnitsa was gone. His sister was already in Novosibirsk and he joined her there. His mother graduated from the Moscow Institute for steel and alloys and was placed in Novosibirsk. They met there.
David is head of the Jewish community of Cherkassy. He feels that everything is fine within the Jewish community. There is a high standard of living in Cherkassy. There is a summer camp for children and a parent together. The camp is supported by the New Jersey Jewish Federation.

Anna Litichevskaya (wife of David) was born in Novosibirsk in 1947. David’s mother worried that he would not find a Jewish wife. The fathers and grandfather got together at the synagogue and came up with Anna and David. They are married and have three grandchildren. A son and daughter live in Canada and Israel. Anna worked for 20 years for a Cherkassy non-profit charity.

4. Bella Dytoislak was born in Cherkassy in 1937. She worked for 40 years as a pediatric therapist. She still works with alternative medicine with massage. She teaches rhythm gymnastics and has clients at home. Her husband died in 1986. She has one daughter in Russia.

5. Yuri Lugovik was born in 1949 in Preokova near Nemnitsky. He was a military policeman in Cherkassy. His father fought in Stalingrad and died in 1971. His mother, Elena Lugovik, is 90 years old and is doing as well as can be expected.

6. Mila Ganapolskaya said that people with a high pension still have financial difficulties. They have to pay for any repairs to a private house and for coal to heat.

During the Holocaust 8,000 Jews from Cherkassy were killed. The Holocaust monument does not mention Jews.

IV. Monday, May 13, 2019- Lubny- The roads from Cherkassy to Lubny were terrible - deep ruts. Lubny is over 1,000 years old (1,003). It’s the second city to exist after Kiev.

A. Lubny Warm House - We met at the home of Boris and Lyudmila Rudman. Boris is our Adopt-a-Bubbe coordinator in Lubny. They live in a large single home which was originally the home of Boris’ parents. Boris was born in this house. Lyudmila finds the house too large because she had to pay for heat and electricity by the square meter and there are only two of them living here.

The table was already set with much food and there were two other couples there as well. We had all kinds of salad, herring, potato and beef, wine, cognac, coffee and tea.

Members of the Warm House:
1. Boris told us about his father who was a pilot during WWII. America supplied the planes and there were both American and Soviet pilots. They used the airport in Mirgorod, a close by city, Bombs were attached under the plane and they flew through Italy to bomb Germany. This was in 1943 when Lubny was free. The airport existed until 1944. One hot day the pilots were sitting outside and one pilot threw his leather jacket over the fence. It was stolen. The KGB went after the culprit and made him return the jacket to prove to the pilots that they were honest people.

2. Svetlana Gordina was born in 1947 in Azerbaijan. Svetlana’s father was a military officer, so they moved around a lot - Bulgaria, Germany. Svetlana studied in Germany. She came to Lubny in 1957 and went to Kiev University with a degree in 13th century English. She is fluent in English and French and spoke English very well. When she graduated, she was sent to work in Donetsk and stayed there for 41 years. She and her husband left in 2014 when Putin attacked Donetsk and came to Lubny where they had a relative. Svetlana said that Donetsk was a beautiful city before the war, but now only the city center exists.
3. Yuri Gordin, husband of Svetlana, was born March 11, 1947, in Lubny. They studied together in 10th grade and dated for five years. February 1, 2019, they celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary. Both had parents in Lubny while they lived in Donetsk. Yuri worked at the Donetsk Institute for Railway Transport for 40 years. They have one son and three grandchildren, who live in California. They moved there 10 years ago and they talk by Skype.

4. Vladimir Nakota was born in 1960 in Lubny. He is head of the Lubny Jewish Community for the past year and a half.

5. Valentina Fedoria was born in 1957 in Karelia in a city called Belamorsk. Her parents were military officers. She and Vladimir are cousins.

B. Adopt-a-Bubbe visit with Nina Zeltser, born in 1939 in Kremenchug. Nina fell six years ago and broke her hip. She said that at that time, there was no possibility of hip surgery, so she has been an invalid ever since. She fell at night when she got up to go to the bathroom and her blood pressure dropped, making her dizzy. She is in a lot of pain and takes pain killers, some even by injection, but they don’t last very long. She doesn’t leave her apartment. Nina said she had been in very good shape before she fell and had done a lot of exercise. She skied and was active every day. Apparently the pain is getting worse.

Nina has a patronage worker from Chesed every weekday for a couple of hours. A niece comes on the weekend, but often doesn’t show. The niece told Nina not to have surgery on her hip, so Nina has given up the idea. Sometimes the patronage worker comes on the weekend without pay.

Nina was married to Peter Zeltser. They were unable to have children due to a problem with her husband and she didn’t want another man. Peter died in 1994 after several strokes.

Nina worked for 44 years, three months and three days in Poltava in a factory which manufactures plastics. Her pension is 5,250 hrv.($202)/month and is too high to qualify for Chesed’s SmartCard. Nina said she spends a lot to purchase medicines for pain, but they don’t help much.
Boris left a food package with a whole chicken, apples, peach juice, oatmeal, cheese, kiwi, lemons and cooking oil.

C. Adopt-a-Bubbe visit with Raisa Grigorievna Shevchenko. She was born in 1937 in Lubny. In 1939 the family moved to Novogradvolinsk. Both parents were ardent Communists. Her mother worked in a hospital and her father was a machinist. They were evacuated to Kazakhstan during the war and stayed there until 1944. Her father transported war materiel. One day while on a transport a bomb dropped and he was hit by shrapnel. It landed in his lung, but was never removed because the surgery would be too dangerous. It stayed with him until he died at age 80. Her father was training a woman to be a train engineer and machinist on a train to the front.

Raisa worked for 40 years as a head nurse in Lubny. From 1964 - 1984, she worked at a Polyclinic for railroad workers. Then she worked at a blood bank where they did transfusions.

Raisa’s pension is 2,300 hrv. ($88)/month. She was a patronnage worker herself at Chesed for 10 years. She receives a SmartCard from Chesed for 2,500 hrv. ($96)/month. Half of it is spent on medicine. Raisa has glaucoma in one eye and no vision in that eye. The other eye has a cataract, but they don’t want to do surgery because it’s her only seeing eye. She also has arthritis in her hip and takes a course of injections to lubricate her hip. She broke her arm two years ago and it has affected her hand. A patronnage worked from Chesed comes very weekday for three hours. She manages on her own over the weekend. As Raisa said, she can use her telephone if she needs help.

Raisa told us that 12 people got together for Pesach at the Jewish Community Center. There is one man who leads the Seder from a Haggadah and makes comments to keep it interesting. Everyone brought food according to plan and they even made their own wine. Raisa gave us a taste of a wine she makes from currants. This juice was nonalcoholic. She also makes a cognac which we tasted.

Boris Rudman said that the Joint rents an office at the Jewish Community Center for accounting - probably for their patronnage worker program.

V. Tuesday, May 14, 2019 - Zasulye Holocaust Site and Poltava

A. Boris Rudman went with us to the Holocaust site for the Jews of Lubny. There is also a Holocaust Museum in the local Zasulye School initiated by RememberUS.org, whom Debbie had contact with earlier and again before our trip. The Holocaust site is off to one side of the village on unused land. There is a large concrete menorah with a hollow Jewish star in the middle. The hollowness takes the soul out of the event. The Jews of Lubny were collected in the main market place and told they would be resettled. They walked to this site, which is quite a distance from central Lubny. They were held a short distance from the killing site and small groups taken at a time for the killing. The killing began on October 16, 1941. Lubny was undefended because they expected the Germans to come from the
north and instead they came from the direction of Poltava - from the south.

The first memorial was put up in 1956 and it is mounted on the back of the menorah. It says nothing about Jews. In 1957 the remains of those killed were exhumed and reburied under the menorah. In 2001 a Danish researcher found the original German files on the killing which included a number of photographs taken by a German soldier on leave for a day. They were able to piece together the identity of many of those killed and they are on plaques over the original killing ground. They think that 4,000 Jews were killed there.

B. The Holocaust museum is in the first room in the school. Another three rooms are devoted to Ukrainian history. We met the principal of the school and two student guides - a girl Lera and a boy Ilya who spoke good English. In the Poltava region they state that 22,340 Jews were murdered in the Holocaust, but they haven’t counted the 4,000 shot at this site. The Germans also killed Jewish doctors in the Lubny hospital. They had details about two cases of Ukrainians saving Jews on the way to be killed. In one case, a mother carrying her baby fell into a hole behind a bush and a woman found and rescued her. In another case two families were saved by a farm couple. These people were hidden throughout the war and they survived. There were a number of photos of people bundled in layers of warm clothing. Their faces showed that they knew their fate.

C. We traveled to Poltava where we picked up our Adopt-a-Bubbe coordinator, Tatyana Chalimon at the Chesed building. The head of Chesed, Svetlana Moskvitina, was away, so we didn’t go inside but went right to our first home visit.

D. Alexander Grigorievich Shygukovich was born in Poltava in 1947. In 1981, when he was 34 years old, he had a major stroke which paralyzed the left side of his body. It made him an invalid and now defines his life. He said he had five or six strokes which severely disabled him. He had a younger brother who used to help him, but he died in 2018 from cancer. His mother died at age 94 in 2016. There are nieces in his brother’s family, but he rarely has any contact with them - perhaps once or twice a year. Alexander was married for five years and has a son, but the son went to live with his mother after a divorce and Alexander hasn’t seen him in 18 years.

Tatyana said that Alexander does not receive anything extra from anybody. His pension is 2,500 hrv. ($96)/month, which is too high to qualify for a SmartCard from Chesed. He does have patronnage service every day for two to three hours including weekends. Alexander does not go outside at all, although he lives on the first floor. Tatyana said they are in the process of forming a group of volunteers and they may be able to help Alexander. Most of the volunteers are women. He spends his time reading or watching TV. He is not interested in a computer. He uses a wheelchair. He owns his apartment and receives a subsidy of 700 hrv. ($27)/month in the mail. This is given out to people with little income. His utilities in April were 900 hrv. ($35)/month without heat. He barely gets by.

He does not have physical therapy. He has trouble getting a doctor to come, but if he insists, he does receive a visit from a doctor when
needed. Alexander gave us one example of what happened when he was feeling poorly and called the doctor’s office. The assistant insisted that she knew how to treat him and suggested some medication. He didn’t need a doctor. He followed her advice, but still felt terrible. It didn’t help, so he called back the next day and demanded to have a doctor visit him. The doctor came and prescribed medicine which did help.

The food package from Adopt-a-Bubbe contained cheese, macaroni, cookies, two types of kasha, rice, sugar and cooking oil.

E. Home visit with two sisters - Irina Vladimirovna Davidova, born in 1955 and Larissa Vladimirovna Cigenko, born in 1949. These sisters are refugees from the Luhansk region of war and fled in 2014 when war broke out. They first went to Russia and then came to Poltava where a friend lives. Irina’s husband was an alcoholic and died in 2007. Larissa has a son and one grandson.

Irina is a type II diabetic and takes medicine. Her mother was also a type II diabetic. She has hypertension and is losing her sight. She complained of back pain. Larissa had gallstone surgery and cataract surgery a little over a month ago. She doesn’t notice much change in her vision. One eye has glaucoma. Tatyana said that a British grant to the eye department was just received, so they should have their vision and eyeglass prescriptions checked.

The Adopt-a-Bubbe gift of food included dietetic cookies, two packages of Kasha, two packages of macaroni two containers of juice, cheese, two liters of cooking oil, and artificial sweetener which we had sent earlier.

VI. Wednesday, May 15, 2019 - Berdyansk

A. We met our Adopt-a-Bubbe coordinator, Alexander Drozdov, at his office building where he shares space with Chesed. Chesed rents one room and has one employee who most likely does the scheduling and paperwork for patronnage workers. Alexander is head of the Jewish community in Berdyansk. He used to have a part-time job with Chesed, but they let all workers but one go. They have 20 patronnage workers and perhaps 10 bedridden clients.

B. Alexander explained what happened to Jews in Berdyansk during the Holocaust. On October 19, 2041, Nazi troops occupied Berdyansk. They placed ads and told all Jews to report to the center of the city with their belongings to be relocated to Melitopol, a larger city two hours away. Those who refused to show up would be shot. They were driven to a sanatorium owned by the KGB and ordered to take off their clothes. They collected groups of 10 and took them to the killing site and shot them. This went on all day. The next day the Germans came and took away all their belongings. The local police participated in the killings. Some of the items left by the Jews are in the Holocaust Museum in Dnipro. Alexander told us that one of the women we will meet in a home visit is a survivor of the Holocaust.

Volodya Bogomolny, who was head of the Jewish community in Melitopol before he emigrated to Israel, showed us the Holocaust site several years ago. It is quite outside of Melitopol and it was where they had dug a very long and deep trench to prevent German tanks from entering Melitopol. However, the Germans came from another direction. They used the open trench to kill Jews and anyone else who got in their way. There is a large monument at the site, which Volodya had worked with the city officials to install. This is
where Holocaust commemorations are held. Jews were brought to this site from several other places. It is in a huge open field with no buildings around.

Alexander told us that there used to be some very famous Jews in Berdyansk. There is an art museum from a man called Brodsky. Halkin was a famous research scientist who created the vaccine for cholera.

There used to be three synagogues in Berdyansk. The Nazis bombed some synagogues. There is still a Karelian synagogue which is used as a sport center. Last year the whole Jewish community came to the WWII monument. Most Jews in Berdyansk are in mixed marriages - either the husband or wife is not Jewish. Around 180 Jews belong to the Jewish community. Approximately 80 of them need help. It is an aging community because many young people emigrate to Israel or Poland for jobs. When Alexander obtains a grant of 200 hrv. ($8) from Adopt-a-Bubbe he helps around 10 people. Now he’ll help somewhat fewer people because food has become more expensive. Everyone is complaining about this. Judy suggested that Alexander ask Tanya Sidelkovskaya for a little more in funds. Alexander is halachically Jewish because his mother was Jewish, but he has a Russian wife.

Alexander spoke about a Christian organization which is providing food for Jews. It’s main office is in Zhitomir and is called “House of Bread.” They make arrangements with a particular kitchen in Berdyansk and ask them to provide one free meal a day Monday through Friday to those who need it. People have to provide documentation that they are really Jewish and are really in need. Their pension must be below 2,500 hrv. ($96)/month. Debbie was able to locate the organization on the Internet and it turned out to be Jews for Jesus, a group well known to proselytize to convert Jews.

The Israeli Consul came to Berdyansk from Melitopol and rented a bus to help Jews establish their Jewish identity. Alexander said that half of those on the bus were known within the Jewish community. The other half he mostly recognized, but never knew they were even Jewish.

C. Home visit in Berdyansk with Dina Yakovlevna Toolman, who was born in 1938 in Berdyansk. Dina is the woman Alexander had told us survived the Holocaust as a young child. Dina lived with her mother in a large home in the center of Berdyansk, which housed a couple of families. Dina’s father was at the front. Dina even remembers as a three year old going to the train station to say goodbye to her father and crying her eyes out because she thought her father was leaving her. He did survive the war and came back with a concussion. They had a good neighbor who lived in their house, a Ukrainian named Anton Ivanovich. Dina’s mother was not able to evacuate because Dina was obviously very ill. When instructions came from the Germans to prepare to leave, Anton told her not to go. He said she was not strong enough to survive the relocation. She followed his advice and stayed.

Coincidentally, there were several doctors in Berdyansk on vacation from Moscow and were caught when the German army arrived and not allowed to leave. No one could leave without permission. Dina’s Mother took her to the hospital and they determined that Dina had an abscess on her kidney which required surgery. One of the visiting doctors was a skilled surgeon and operated on Dina on October 19. No local doctor was skilled enough to do this. Dina’s Mother stood at her head as they operated and refused to leave her side. Dina recovered and this doctor saved her life.

Anton was skilled in knowing how to survive under the occupation. He obtained papers for Dina and her mother that stated she was Polish and Dina had been conceived by an earlier marriage with a Russian. Dina said that her Mother did not look Jewish at all. Someone turned in her mother’s name to the police.
and she was called in for questioning. She showed them her papers and said she was Polish - not Jewish. The officer said she had to find two witnesses to verify this. Anton and another neighbor went to the police to verify her identity and she was let go.

Nearly 900 were murdered at the Holocaust site. Local police were involved as well as some men from Romania. Jews were shot and killed in the street, too - anywhere they were. Even though they had good papers, they still tried to hide and often slept with different friends. This lasted until September 17, 1943, when Berdyansk was liberated by the Russian army.

Dina’s pension is 7,000 hrv./month plus a little more. It comes from Almaty where Dina taught speech therapy at a children’s boarding school. It was very hard work. She also receives funds from the German Claims Conference every three months. Recently they added another 300 euros. She received a patronnage worker for 20 hours/week, Monday through Friday. Dina has two daughters and one grandson. One daughter lives in Tyumen in the Urals, and the other lives in Almaty. No relatives live in Berdyansk.

The food package from Adopt-a-Bubbe contained chicken, butter, cooking oil, a tin of sardines, milk, a bag of some kind of grain, sugar, coffee, cookies, and tea. The food package to all the people we visited was identical.

A. The second home visit was with people Tanya Sidelkovskaya had seen last summer. Raisa Davidovna Kasfkina was born February 10, 1950. Her nephew, Boris Nikolaevich Moras, lives with her. Boris was born February 25, 1960. Raisa is a type II diabetic and said she can spend up to 1,000 hrv./month on medicine. She also has a heart problem, hypertension, hardening of the arteries and an iron deficiency. Boris has hardening of the arteries and arthritis. Boris has been identified an Invalid type II and is unable to work.

Although their apartment is on the first floor, Raisa does not go out. She has difficulty walking and gets dizzy. She never married and has no children. Boris has a niece who lives in Israel.

Raisa’s pension is 2,800 hrv./month. Boris’ pension as an invalid is 1,660 hrv./month. Raisa has a SmartCard from Chesed with 1,035 hrv./every three months. Most of their money goes for food. They paid 2,000 hrv. for heating/month. Their heating bill for October through April was 1,550 hrv./month. Next year they will pay for a full year. They own this apartment. More than 1,000 goes for utilities. The total is 3,000 hrv. Raisa receives a subsidy of 1,500 hrv./month in cash. It has only been in actual cash for two months, so she is waiting to see if that will continue.

Raisa used to teach math at the college level. She sometimes makes up problems in her head to keep active. She also sews. They have relatives in Germany whom they speak with by phone. Debbie asked about Raisa’s favorite recipe. It is White Cheese Cake. Raisa proceeded to tell us how she makes it.

B. The third home visit was with Lilia Kuznetsova, who was born in 1943 in Georgia. Where the family had evacuated. Lilia lives with her daughter, Lena Serduk, born in 1967, and her son-in-law, Vitaly Serduk. Lilia worked for 40 years as a music teacher. She taught,
played the piano and led a choral group. Lena is also a talented musician, although her job is working for a union doing all kinds of tasks.

Lilia’s pension is 1,991 hrv. month. She receives a SmartCard from Chesed with 800 hrv./month. She does not receive a subsidy. The apartment they live in belongs to Lena’s husband. Lilia goes outside twice a year - on union day and on memory day. Lena and Vitaly have a son and two daughters. The older daughter, Alicia, is 28 years old and lives in Berdyansk. She is a housekeeper. The son is younger, 20 years old, and lives in Lviv. A second daughter, Larissa, has three children and lives in Berdyansk. Larissa had a stroke and also broke her hand. She is partly paralyzed.

VII. Thursday, May 16, 2019 - Berdyansk and Melitopol
A. Before leaving Berdyansk, we went to the Chesed office. It is a single room on the second floor of an office building. Victoria (Vika) is in charge of the office and the only office employee. There are 20 Patronnage workers. The office is around 12’ x 12’ and it was filled with a wall of books and boxes stacked along another wall. A group of 10 pensioners were gathered with only one man in the group. They were here for some activity - a talk or crafts of some kind. This group travels on their own to the office. Yakov gave them an explanation of who we are and what we do. They asked a few questions. The group occasionally travels to other cities by bus - Melitopol, Zaporozhe, and even Dnipro.

Chesed in Berdyansk is now under the guidance of Chesed in Zaporozhe, which oversees the whole region of Cheseds. We know the head of Chesed in Zaporozhe - Elena because she was previously head of Chesed in Melitopol and coordinated our Adopt-a-Bubbe program there. Chesed in Berdyansk used to have more space and more employees, but they eliminated the space and let the other employees go. It’s a bare bones operation.

B. We drove to Chesed Velvele in Melitopol, about a two hour drive from Berdyansk. Sveta Marshak was leading a group of about 12 pensioners in a craft project. We went into another room to meet with Irina Katecheva, the deputy director of Chesed in Melitopol. Our Adopt-a-Bubbe coordinator was also there - Mila Zamchevskaya. We left a package of over-the-counter medicines with Irina to use as she saw fit. It contained an antacid, allergy meds, baby aspirin, ibuprofen, and an nsaid painkiller.

Irina said that the group we saw was called “Six Day in the Middle.” Children are there on Sundays. The club has two shifts. In the morning they bring people who cannot get here are their own. Chesed has a van. Their ages range from 75 to 84 and have some disability. They can only bring 10 people at a time. Everyone they bring has patronnage service. They have tea and have some lesson. Volunteers also participate with them. The second shift is from 1:00 - 3:00 P.M. and involves music. On Fridays there are two shifts for Kabbalat Shabbat with 12 people in a group. There are really four kinds of Kabbalat Shabbat groups. One is traditional in style and they say prayers and kaddish. The other three groups are people who are not close to tradition, but they light candles and say kiddish.

There is a Bread and Milk program where young people bring bread and milk and light candles. They do it here at Chesed. A British organization called DoubleJ funds this. It involves 20 elderly Jews and 10 young Jews, so the youngsters have two matches. The grant from England provides a yearly budget. The Joint distributed the grant for young leaders, who receive money on a SmartCard. The parents control the money for the very young. They use it to communicate with the elderly by phone. They also fund an “Open House” program where the host welcomes two groups of eight. They are served tea and small snacks or a

Above, left to right: Irina Katecheva, Galina Zilberstein & Sveta Marshak

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sandwich - not a hot meal. There are three groups for the “Open House.” The first is for veterans, Holocaust survivors or traumatized people and a psychologist works with them. The second group is for a performance or learning and the third is for entertainment. Each group has two meetings a month and they are in touch by phone between meetings.

In the summertime they collect people by car and drive to a park between 9:00 A.M. and 1:00 P.M. The driver is hired part time. As they drive through the city, they can see what changes are taking place.

There are nearly 250 people on the Chesed list. Of these, 80 are victims of war and are dying out. They have 50 patronnage workers. They have 103 who need patronnage service. After a stroke, clients need 24 hour patronnage help. They have three with a stroke and five patronnage workers help them 24 hours a day. However, only Holocaust survivors receive 24 hours of service. Non survivors cannot receive more than 22 hours per week.

The SmartCard has several categories. Victims of the Holocaust receive a card if their pensions are under 5,500 hrv.($212)/month. Non victims must have pensions below 2,300 hrv.($88)/month. Even a penny above disqualifies them. Seventy-eight Holocaust victims receive a SmartCard. Two have pensions above 5,500 hrv.($212). The regional head of Chesed has an office in Dnipro. Headquarters for the Joint Distribution Committee are in Israel.

Debbie asked Irina what program she was most proud of and excited about. She talked about being in charge of patronnage service when it was not connected to the income of the clients. When asked what program or items she would add, she talked about washing machines, pampers, shampoo, patient therapy and exercise and massage. They could use more funds to send laundry out to the city. It costs 18 hrv.($0.69) per kg. Of laundry - less than $1. They are O.K. in today’s budget. There are many incontinent people.

Anna Stasenko joined us. She is head of the Jewish community in Melitopol. She said that non victims have many problems. Their pensions are less and life is harder. They just began a program to issue SmartCards without money. They issue 250 cards. Only 80 victims get money or if they are in bad shape. Nineteen get nothing. The highest pension is 2,400 hrv./month. The lowest is 550 hrv.($21) /month for a victim and 800 hrv.($31)/month for a non-victim.

They appreciate receiving boxes of clothing. Keep sending. They really need shoes. Their children’s dance group could use specialized dancing equipment - shoes, leotards, costumes. They don’t need men’s suit jackets.

Nadezhda Dareylo & her son
Yuri Ivanko

C. Home visit with Nadezhda Dareylo, born in 1951 in Melitopol, and her son Yuri Ivanko, born in 1975 in Melitopol. Nadezhda is a single mother who has three grown sons, two of whom are disabled. The youngest, Yuri, lives with her. A middle son, Yevgeny, is in a special dormitory and has been disabled since birth. His father was a military officer and died of a stroke at age 78. He was older than Nadezhda. The oldest son, Alexander, was born in 1972 and lives in Donetsk. His family went to Donetsk before the war and he says he cannot come back. Alexander has a son who is 27 years old.

Yuri was disabled by a stroke in 2017. When he had the stroke, his wife left him and took their young son, Mikhail, with her. The boy is being raised by her grandmother and the wife is
“looking for a new life.” Yuri is an insulin dependent diabetic. He used to work in a metal factory. He showed us a photo of him with his wife and son in happier days. He also has photos of Mikhail with sport medals.

Yuri is classified as disabled type III. His pension is 1,500 hrv. ($58)/month. Insulin is supplied by the government. His father died in 2018 of alcoholism when he fell, hit his head and died in hospital. Nadezhda’s pension is 3,000 hrv. ($115)/month - too high to qualify for a SmartCard from Chesed. Chesed did help them by installing a shower and fixing the bathroom ceiling. They have a washing machine. They have a leak in the roof of their home. Their utilities (gas, water, phone, electric) cost 1,000 hrv. ($38)/month. There is no subsidy or other income. Nadezhda is a type II diabetic and takes pills. She also said she has chronic bronchitis and “other problems.” She looks young and healthy.

The gift of food from Adopt-a-Bubbe contained chicken, cooking oil, rice, kasha, macaroni, sugar and tea. It cost around 300 hrv. ($12).

D. Home visit with Irina Alexandrovna Lashko, born in 1932 in Secu Lok in the Ural Mountains in evacuation. She had one son who died at age 27 in 1981 from lympho sarcoma, a type of cancer. He was born in 1954. Her son’s wife also died in 2012 or 2013. She has one granddaughter who lives in Israel, who is 42 years old, and one great grandson.

Irina is quite disabled and has trouble moving, sitting, getting up or walking. She uses a cane. She has patronnage service from Chesed five times a week and every other Saturday for four hours a day. Her husband died in 1959 from pancreatic cancer. He was a military surgeon. Irina used to teach French at the high school level. Her pension is 2,600 hrv. ($100)/month, which is too high to qualify for a SmartCard from Chesed. She receives another 200 hrv. ($8)/month, so her pension is actually 2,800 hrv. ($108).

A Christian organization which helps Jews sent money to purchase 1,000 kg. of coal for heating. She actually needs 2,000 kg for the winter season. She survives because her girlfriend’s son is a successful businessman and he supports her with medicine and visits. He also bought the second 1,000 kg. of coal.

Irina is part of the Bread and Milk program where a youngster visits her. When we asked her about health problems, she laughed. She lost the vision in one eye. She takes thyroid replacement and has hypothyroidism. She has cardiology problems. Because Irina is homebound, she cannot go to the polyclinic or hospital since 2012. The patronnage worker takes care of her garden, which is lovely with many flowers in bloom. She had hypertension, but now it is reduced to 120 with medicine. It used to be 190 or 200.

The gift of food from Adopt-a-Bubbe contained chicken, macaroni, kasha, sugar rice, cooking oil and tea. It cost 300 hrv. ($12).

VIII. Friday, May 16, 2019 - Meeting with Rabbi Shmuel Kaminezki
A. Comments from Rabbi Kaminezki:
Our new president will be inaugurated on Monday, May 19. U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo is coming to represent the American government. This means Zelensky will be in charge of any parliament changes, which is crucial to his success. Poroshenko has filled parliament with his own supporters.
The synagogue in Melitopol needs at least a minyan to function. Not likely to happen so it probably won’t be renovated and opened.

Yeshiva boys do home visits on Chanukah. Would everyone want it (more tradition)? Most people wouldn’t mind a mezuzah inside and Shabbat candles. Even when you’re alone they remind you that you are part of a community. Thirty percent of the people in Ukraine have Jewish roots - 300,000 people. Many Jews are permanently rejected by the Israeli consulate because they list their religion as Christian on forms. They are put on a blacklist. People from small towns are the ones who usually make this mistake.

People who go to Israel live 15 years longer and are happier. If they go to Israel, their grandchildren will be Jewish. Jewish men don’t drink and make money, so they are attracted to any Ukrainian beauty.

Action should keep doing what it is doing - meet people directly. No one does this. The Joint is a big machine and they don’t see the person. “Whoever saves one person, saves the world.” Only Ukraine has a large Jewish community and no money. Pensions are low. Action should tell the individual story - how we change lives.

Have a donor who is helping to renovate a resort area not far away. Showed us photos of the place.

We are underpaid financially, but doing G-d’s work. Ask people to go to Smela themself or give $10,000/month. It’s how the money is spent that is important.

IX. Saturday, May 18, 2019 - Shabbat in Dnipro

X. Sunday, May 19, 2019 - travel to Krivoy Rog

A. Met our new Adopt-a-Bubbe coordinator, Marina Borisenko and went to our first home visit with a couple - Clara Grigorievna Gorbatinko, born in 1933, and Vladimir Dmitrievich Gorbatinko, born in 1937. They have been married for 60 years. Clara was born in Bessarabia which was part of Ukraine, not Moldova. Vladimir was born in Krasna Gorod in Donetsk oblast.

They have two sons. Phillip is 31 years old and was born in 1960. He is a former military officer and works in the far east of Russia. He is married. Daras is 32 years old and unmarried. Vladimir went to a mining college and then worked in the mines. He also went to a technical college and worked on vehicles. He graduated from a Kiev Institute, worked with metal and became head of the technical department. Clara worked at a Bank.

Clara told us about her WWII experience. She was four years old when war began on June 22 at 4:00 A.M. They immediately evacuated, When bombs started to drop, they put all their archive documents in a cart and Clara and Joseph, a younger brother, were taken to Bendery, Moldova, where they had relatives. They knew the Nazi army was coming very fast, so they left for Odessa. From there they took a...
train to Vesnisinsk. The Nazis began to bomb the station and shoot at people running to a field. They came back to a different train which ended up at Stalingrad. From Stalingrad they took a barge to the other side of the Volga River to Lebedovka Village in Saratov oblast with nothing - no clothing. Her parents worked at a Kolhoz. The Nazis never reached the other side of the Volga River. They stayed in this place for four years living with another family in one room. Her father was a diabetic. Mother had gall stones which were very painful. The years 1941 and 1942 were years of hunger. The head of the Kolhoz gave her mother ½ liter of milk for her gall stones, which she gave to her children. There was no clothing and no school. Her mother taught them from a newspaper. In 1945 Clara was 12 years old and they moved back to Bessarabia. She graduated high school and went to an Odessa finance college. In 1957, after graduation, she was sent to work in Krivoy Rog. First she was a bank teller, then a controller, and then became head of the department. Clara worked for an additional five years beyond the usual retirement age of 55 for a woman.

Vladimir stayed in Donetsk under occupation for the duration of the war. His mother was Russian and his father Ukrainian. His father was mobilized in 1941, but came back after two weeks. The German army had surrounded them and the head of his unit told them to go home. His father was a driver and he worked for the Germans fixing vehicles - not as a driver. Vladimir also had two younger sisters - one born in 1939 and another in 1947. The Nazis came two or three days his father came back. He was hired by the Nazis to repair vehicles. In 1942 with the Red Army close, the Nazis left. They returned to Vladimir’s house and asked where his father was. His mother didn’t know. She said you took him and he didn’t return. They gave her one week to find him and they took his father with them to a city. He returned in 1945.

Clara’s pension is 3,600 hrv. ($138)/month. Vladimir’s pension is 4,500 hrv. ($173)/month. They receive nothing from the German government and no subsidy. Last year they had a SmartCard from Chesed with 1,600 hrv. ($62)/month. This year the SmartCard holds 720 hrv. ($28) /month. Last month they paid 1,800 hrv. ($69) for utilities. In the winter time they paid 2,500 hrv. ($96) /month with heat. They own their apartment. They pay taxes to the government, but the government always takes more money with no explanation. When they applied for a subsidy, they had to show all documentation. Their son had another apartment in this building and according to apartment records he also owns their apartment. As a result, they were turned down.

Clara has lost vision in one eye and has glaucoma in the second eye. She uses eye drops which she requested with the gift of food from Adopt-a-Bubbe. She fell a while ago because she felt dizzy. She broke her hip and spent three weeks in bed and then began to walk. Her hip remained in place. Clara has type II diabetes. Her whole family was diabetic. Vladimir became diabetic after a heart attack in 1997.

The food package from Adopt-a-Bubbe contained Bausch & Lomb eye drops, cabbage, cucumber, cooking oil, blueberry juice, halvah, butter and dietician cereal bars.

B. Our second home visit was with twin sisters, Raisa and Ella Valensteyn. They were born in April, 1940 in Kiev. They don’t remember their father because he died in 1943 fighting near Kharkov. They had two older brothers, who have since passed away. In 1940 their father was sent to Moldova and when war broke out he was sent to Kharkov. He and their mother were communists. In 1941, Anatoly, the oldest brother, was five. Yuli, the younger brother, was three and the twins were one year and two months. Their mother moved everyone to the basement to protect them from bombs. Ella was hit by shrapnel in the arm. Their father helped...
them to the train and they went to the other side of the Volga River until 1946. Their mother worked and they went to a kindergarten. In August 1946 they went to Odessa. People stole an extra food card from their mother and a suitcase of clothing. They returned to Kiev, but their apartment had been given to a WWII invalid. They received a special letter about their father’s death. The company which their father had worked for before the war, loaned them a large car and brought them to the village of Levshinka in Ukraine.

The girls graduated high school and lived together until age 18. Ella left for Kharkov to work as a controller in a factory which built tanks. Raisa stayed with her mother until she died. Yuli went to college and studied electro mechanics. Anatoly served in the army in Siberia, a difficult position at a political prison. In 1958 Anatoly came to Krivoy Rog. There was work and housing in the city and many prisoners came after release to find work. This was one of three open cities for ex-prisoners to live. In 1962 Anatoly came and took Raisa and their mother to Krivoy Rog. At first they lived in barracks. There was a lot of building and they soon had an apartment. Raisa worked with a compressor in the building industry.

Ella’s pension is 3,000 hrv. ($115)/month. Raisa’s pension is 2,500 hrv. ($96)/month. They joked that Ella is 15 minutes older and that’s why her pension is higher. Because their father died in the war, they have a 50% discount on utilities. They receive 1,259 hrv. ($48)/month on the Chesed SmartCard. They have been clients of Chesed since 1997. Yuri Shiffrin’s mother originally brought them to Chesed.

Yuri Shiffrin was the first Jewish community organizer after the Soviet Union fell apart and led the community for 25 years. His wife, Inna Shiffrina, was our original Adopt-a-Bubbe coordinator until she recently joined her daughter in Germany. Yuri died a number of years ago. Raisa and Ella enjoy the cultural programs at Chesed even though it takes them 1½ to 2 hours to travel there by subway. As Yakov said, they spend five hours traveling for a two hour program! Five years ago they had a dacha and used to walk there and grew everything.

The gift of food from Adopt-a-Bubbe contained eye medicine for Ella, juice, cooking oil, cabbage, butter, three tomatoes and four cucumbers.

C. Krivoy Rog Warm House at Marina Borisenko’s apartment. One couple was unable to come, so there was a small group. We had already met Raisa and Ella who came. The one new person was Tamara Kadir, who helped Marina with the food and dishes. Today is Yakov’s 71st birthday by the Jewish calendar - 14th of Adar, so the first toast was for him.

Marina Borisenko is a trained nurse. She studied at a medical college in Crimea. There was a matzah factory nearby and she brought matzah home for Pesach when she visited. They made their own morror. Her family tried to maintain some Jewish tradition. Yuri Shiffrin’s mother and Marina distributed medicine to the Jewish community. She and Yakov remembered the butter which Rabbi Lazer Avtzon had brought from America. Avtzon had obtained a whole container of surplus butter, and butter in Ukraine was
very scarce. They had a special coupon for butter because it was not available. They could get 200 grams only with coupons. This was in 1992 - 1993. Judy still remembers seeing a warehouse full of butter in Dnepropetrovsk and the anger of people who were waiting for butter. It was talked about on TV, but took a while for delivery.

She recently took a three month course and now assists a doctor who practices family medicine in a village. Perhaps she is a nurse practitioner in American terms. It’s part of a new movement in Ukraine to create family doctors rather than many specialists and it has the medical community in an uproar. Cardiologists are now family physicians regardless of desire and expertise. They are trying to do it overnight rather than wait to train new family physicians. Many doctors are angry.

Marina told us stories about herself as a child and her father, to whom she was obviously very close. When she was a school girl, she fought with a boy who called her names and she even tore his shirt and pants. Her mother punished her and told her to kneel in a corner until her father came home. She sprinkled salt and kasha around the kneeling child. Her father wasn’t so upset. Marina told a story about her father. He fought in WWII up to Berlin. There a fellow soldier said to him, “They killed all the Jews, so what are you doing alive?” Her father fought the guy and was punished by being transferred to a Death Unit (a regular unit given dangerous assignments), and they took his medals for valor away. Twenty years later they returned his medals. Her father was wounded during the war and lost his memory. He couldn’t remember his name in the hospital and told them his name was Abramovich. He eventually regained his memory and they came to his wife and asked if she would like to have her husband back. He was given the status of Invalid Type II. He was ill for two years before he died. He became diabetic and lived with shrapnel. He often spent time in the hospital. He died in 1998 at age 67.

XI. Monday, May 20 - Picking up Karen and Jared Rosner (Judy’s daughter and grandson) at the airport and inauguration day.
A. The new president elect Zelensky was inaugurated on May 19, which is very important to end the term of President Poroshenko before he could curtail any powers of the incoming president. It was originally scheduled for June 3, but there was an important reason it couldn’t wait due to parliament. Everything was telecast. Yakov was very impressed with his speech. He talked about ending the war in the east, reclaiming their land taken by Russia. He said he used to make people laugh, but now he wants to keep people from crying. He called for Ukrainians overseas to come back and help the country - especially those with technical skills. There is a lot of hope to end corruption. He dismissed the head of the army, the procurator general (head of the courts) and others. It’s a beginning. Over 73% of the people voted for him – an unknown TV comedian. Poroshenko got very few votes and Yulia Tymoshenko even less. Rabbi Kaminezki was invited to the inauguration.

B. Karen and Jared’s plane came in late, but they landed O.K. After checking into the Menorah Hotel, we had dinner together at Mendi’s restaurant in the Menorah Center. Then Yakov took us on a tour of the Menorah Center and synagogue. Jared kept falling asleep, so we walked him back to the hotel to go to bed and the rest of us kept touring. We walked to the old synagogue down the street, which now houses around 25 Jewish ex-prisoners. The worship area is completely updated and the balcony removed. The back leads to rooms for sleeping and a library. It’s a new program. It keeps these people off the street and the aim is to rehabilitate them for jobs. No one is willing to rent to ex-prisoners or give them work, so it’s a life saver. They have clean beds and food and are introduced to Jewish life.

Then Yakov showed us the Pchechin house, which is beyond Beit Hana. It was built by a wealthy man in the 1800’s. The outside is in pink and white to accent the old facade. It’s lovely inside with glass chandeliers and new paint and marble stairways. It connects in the back to the grand ballroom of the Menorah Center and we walked through to the main corridor.

XII. Tuesday, May 21 - A day trip to Zhovty Vody. We’ll meet our new Adopt-a-Bubbe coordinator Margarita Lebedinskaya. She now hosts the Warm House since Lydia Grinberg died this past year.
A. Adopt-a-Bubbe home visit with Svetlana Rogachevskaya and her severely disabled son, Sasha Rogachevsky. Svetlana was born in 1935 in Azerbaijan. Sasha was born in 1955 in Tadjikistan. Svetlana’s husband died suddenly in December, 2018, from a heart attack. He had cataract surgery a year
ago and was tested before that and found to be a diabetic type II and have high blood pressure. He took a new medicine and his legs swelled and fluid collected in his lungs. He was 75 years old. He had complained the last year of not feeling well, but he didn’t like to go to doctors because they did such a poor job treating Sasha. Sasha was disabled since birth. Svetlana talked about a hematoma in the brain. He was better as a young child and began to talk, but not distinctly. Now he doesn’t talk at all. He was sitting in a chair, but he can get up and walk. Svetlana needs to stay with him all the time because he can act up and hurt himself. She is unable to work now. She studied foreign languages in Baku, Azerbaijan, and used to teach English and also worked as a translator in Tadjikistan. Sasha has epilepsy which requires a special medicine Svetlana can only get in Piatihatki with a special stamped prescription. It is injected. It costs 650 hrv. ($25) and lasts about 1½ months. Svetlana needs to send someone to pick it up for her because she can’t leave Sasha for that long. When Svetlana wants to go outside to garden, she takes a sturdy chair out and brings Sasha out to sit.

Svetlana’s parents lived in Sumgait, Azerbaijan. Her mother was Russian and Her father was in the Russian Military. Her father liked Azerbaijan, so they stayed there. Svetlana’s husband was born in Ukraine. He studied at a Mining Institute and was sent to Tadjikistan for geological work. Then they came to Zhovty Vody in 1991.

Svetlana’s pension is 1,500 hrv. ($58)/month. Sasha’s pension for Invalid I is 2,500 hrv. ($962) /month. They receive a subsidy of 2,700 hrv. ($104)/month, but only in the winter. Heating costs them 8,200 hrv. ($315). It was very cold this past winter and Svetlana used very little heat to keep the cost down. Chesed gives Svetlana a SmartCard with 890 hrv. ($34)/month. Svetlana said they are O.K. with paying for food. They have a discount at the Polyclinic. Utilities cost 150 - 200 hrv. (6 - $8)/month. They are on a septic tank and need to hire someone to clean it out twice a year for 570 hrv. ($22). It used to cost 170 hrv. ($7). They pay 50 hrv. ($2) /month for trash pickup. They have patronnage service from Chesed three times a week for two hours. This give Svetlana a chance to leave on errands.

They own their own house. There is a car in their garage, but it is in the deceased husband’s name, so Svetlana has to get the papers transferred to herself. It wasn’t clear whether she knew how to drive. They had done some reconstruction on the house so her parents could live with them, but they both died..

The gift from Adopt-a-Bubbe was a large piece of material to make a sheet. The page was not fully legible and the handwriting was difficult to read.
Maya’s pension is 2,700 hrv. ($104) / month. When her pension was less than 2,000 hrv. ($77), she received a SmartCard from Chesed. Chesed provides patronnage service for 1½ hours every weekday. Her son’s wife comes on the weekend.

Maya’s father was an expert hunter and traveled all over. He shot and then was a taxidermist preserving many animals and birds. They are arrayed in Maya’s apartment - two deer, a pair of peacocks, a boar, and several birds. Maya said that a museum would like them, but they are hers until she dies. She used to have a book about animals her father had written, but it was sold during the 1990 economic crisis. Her father worked in Krivoy Rog. Her mother was director of a primary school in the village Gurovska. Her mother’s friend was the wife of the director of the high school.

During the Nazi occupation, they hid in a cellar. They were afraid that Maya might be taken to Germany. Their father was not Jewish and Maya is not Jewish.

C. Warm House in Zhovty Vody
Margarita Lebedinskaya hosted the Warm House in her apartment. Friends helped to set out the food and it was ready when we arrived. One toast was in memory of Lydia Grinberg who had hosted the Warm House for many years until she died this past year. We had lots of food including a large apple cake decorated with fresh strawberries. Margarita’s young granddaughter was there and she was full of conversation.

Members of the Warm House:
1. Lyudmila Weinstock Brulah, born in 1945 in Malahansk in Zaporozhe oblast. An older sister, Valentina, was born in 1931 in Kazakhstan after evacuation. She received a special bonus as a victim of the Holocaust and German Claims Conference funds. An older sister, Elena, lives in Malachansk. A middle sister born in 1942 also lives in Malachansk. They came to visit Lyudmila. Elena has a son in Germany and a daughter in Vancouver, Canada. Lyudmila’s son is in Israel and they Skype.

2. Lyudmila’s husband died suddenly in 2012. He left fishing and had a heart attack on the way home. They had to go look for him. Good neighbors help Lyudmila out.

3. Lyudmila Chaparral was born in 1941. We often saw her at Lydia Grunberg’s Warm House where she helped out in the kitchen. She was born in the village of Saksadan, close to Zhovty Vody. She graduated high school and moved to Vladivostok in the far northeast. Before that, she moved to Dnipro and got married there. Her husband was in building construction and had previously worked in Vladivostok. They remained there...
for 12 years. A son was born there - Leonid. Now he lives in Georgia. The son’s family stayed in Dnipro. He worked on a new technology to extract oil from grape seeds. The oil is used in medicine and cosmetics. He has an invitation to bring this work to Australia.

4. Tamara Aaronovna Borganskaya was born January 22, 1938, in Zhovty Vody. Her father came to Dnipro in 1939 and changed his name from Aaron to Andrei. He fought in WWII and became an invalid. A brother in Dnipro took her father away from the family because he didn’t want to live as an invalid around them. Tamara never saw him. She worked at a cinema showing movies and later at a factory with press forms. Tamara married in 1957 to Evan Veronim. They were married for 42 years. He died in 1999 from prostate cancer. Their son committed suicide three years ago. A daughter lives in Zhovty Vody. In one year the son’s father-in-law died, then his wife and then the grandson. The grandson visited his father’s grave at the cemetery and three months later was killed in a bicycle accident. Tamara’s daughter married and moved to Switzerland. There is a granddaughter in Switzerland and they use Skype. They also visit two times a year.

XIII. Wednesday, May 22 - Pavlograd and Novomoskovsk
A. We met our Adopt-a-Bubbe coordinator, Nella Zatz, who has been with us for over 20 years. Her grandson also joined us. He recently changed his name from Genya to David and took her last name of Zatz as well. He is an insulin dependent diabetic. He had gone to Israel, but came back. He helps his grandmother shop and carry.

B. Adopt-a-Bubbe home visit with Larissa Borisovna Levenson, born in 1937 in Donetsk, and her husband Isaak Khatzkovich Burshtein, also born in 1937 in Geodosia, Crimea. Larissa was an only child and during WWII went with her mother to Kazakhstan. Her father was at the front. Isaak was also an only child. His father was Jewish and was sent to the front and never came back. There was a large battle in Crimea. Isaak stayed in occupied Crimea. Larissa’s father was wounded and went all the way to Berlin. He received a number of medals and had shrapnel wounds. After the war, they came to Pavlograd.

The couple lived in Donetsk near the airport. In 2014 Putin’s war began and it was at the airport. They saw it on TV. They lived on the 4th floor of an apartment building. The bombing began and their balcony was destroyed, all windows were gone and the inside of the apartment was destroyed. They lived in the basement for 1½ months. After the bombing they went upstairs to cook and change clothes. They weren’t afraid. Those who could leave, left. The apartment seemed quiet. Their grown daughter, Marina, slept in a bed and decided to go to the toilet. Bombing began and she leapt from the bed. The room was on fire. Her husband came and looked at the empty bed in flames. They left. Marina lost her hearing from the bombing. She worked at the synagogue and called her parents to be ready to leave with them. All they took was a small suitcase which they used to take to the basement. The bombing began again. As they sat in their car they had to swerve around a bus which had burned with people in it. No one else was around. They drove to the
daughter’s friend in another area and stayed in their house. The daughter’s friends had left for Kiev and gave her the keys to their apartment. The daughter stayed and worked at the synagogue. A granddaughter, Anya, left Donetsk and went to Krasnominsk to continue her technical education. Her institute moved and Donetsk was occupied. The granddaughter and a friend stayed in Krasnominsk and then left for Kiev and are still in Kiev. They rented an apartment and started to work. Marina is divorced and she stayed in Donetsk. She works as an accountant at the synagogue with a company called Kosher Food Ukraine. Rabbi Pinkas Yushfesky is in Kiev and arranged for four buses to take people out of Donetsk to Pavlograd

They speak with their daughter by phone. There was a lot of stress and a lot of crying. They rent their apartment and don’t see any end to the war. The synagogue in Donetsk is still functioning without a rabbi. Chesed is in the synagogue.

In Pavlograd they began to receive their pensions. Larissa receives 3,900 hrv. ($150)/month and Isaak receive 8,400 hrv. ($323)/month. Isaak was a miner, which is why his pension is so high. Both of them graduated from the mining institute and Isaak worked underground. Larissa said that with Chesed’s help they can survive. There is no such option for non-Jews. Chesed helps pay for their apartment. Larissa is an invalid 2nd degree. Patronnage service comes from Chesed three times a week for 10 hours/week. When we asked about her health, she laughed and said it was easier to tell us what was not a problem. They have been married 60 years and celebrated their 82nd birthdays. They try to stay strong for their daughter and granddaughter.

Adopt-a-Bubbe gave them a gift of a kit to measure blood pressure. Isaak is on amlodipine. His blood pressure used to be 200 and now it is 130 - a good level.

C. The second home visit was also with a couple who fled the fighting in 2014. Lyudmila Nikolaevna Pogorelytseva was born in 1938 in Leningrad. Vitaly Borisovna Pogorelytseva was also born in 1938. He lived in the village of Popasnya in Lugansk oblast. Vitaly was a miner, but didn’t spend a lot of time underground, so his pension is not unusually high.

Lyudmila’s pension is 2,500 hrv. ($96)/month. Vitaly’s pension is 4,300 hrv. ($165)/month. He worked in construction after he left mining. They do not have a subsidy. Chesed pays rent for their apartment - two rooms - of 2,750 hrv. ($106)/month. For utilities, they pay 50% and the owner pays 50% of 350 hrv. ($13)/month. They have a Chesed SmartCard with 1,000 hrv. ($38)/month. Patronnage comes three times a week for three hours at a time. She shops and cleans. In February it will be four years since they came to Pavlograd. They came from the village of Makayevka in Donetsk oblast.

Twice a year they go to the hospital for two weeks for treatment. Both go because Lyudmila cannot stay alone. They receive injections and physical therapy. They pay only for medicine they get in the hospital. The total cost to stay for 12 days is 7,000 hrv. ($269) plus what they pay for their apartment. They used to feel better when they came back, but not the last time in October, so they may not go again. Maybe their bodies can’t take it. Maybe the medicine they took was not right. They were too embarrassed to ask what it was.

They have a son, Andrei, born in 1967. They used to live together. When the war began in 2014, he went to Kiev. He works with a building company. They Skype. They have a granddaughter and two great-
grandchildren. Their granddaughter, Alona, was born after 10 years of marriage. Andrei and family left for Israel in 2005. He came back by himself. Alona married an orthodox Jew, Elran, who is from India. He has five brothers and sisters and they have two children. Andrei is in a second marriage in Kiev.

They go outside just to sit on a bench - not far. They start to move when they feel better because to move is life. They have been married 52 years and celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. They cannot believe what happened to them. Vitaliy’s grandmother was a Finkeshtein. His father was David. He showed us his father’s old birth certificate from Uzbekistan from 1919.

Adopt-a-Bubbe gave them a gift of two stainless steel pots with lids. It’s just what they had asked for.

D. Adopt-a-Bubbe home visit in Novomoskovsk - We met our coordinator, Igor Darievsky and drove to the apartment of Yakov and Nelli Chertkov. Yakov is 89 years old and still quite spry. He met us outside. Nelli was born in 1930 and has been blind for 22 years from glaucoma. They are the Novomoskovsk Jewish community’s oldest couple. Yakov was born in Novoodessa, Nikolaev oblast. Nelli was born in Danilov, Yaroslavskaya oblast. They actually met in Zabarchaist on the Chinese border. Yakov was a military officer and she had come to visit her sister who was a teacher. The sister’s husband was also a military officer. They have been married for 63 years. Next year they will be 90 years old and together 65 years! Yakov is a very famous builder and built a lot of Novomoskovsk. Now he is teaching the younger generation how to be a Ukrainian patriot. Nelli was a kindergarten and primary school teacher. She graduated from a pedagogical college.

Yakov's pension is 4,400 hrv. ($169)/month, which is what a military officer receives. Nelli has had eight eye operations in both Russia and Ukraine. She had no symptoms of glaucoma and the nerves atrophied. Last year she received Chesed’s SmartCard with 600 hrv. ($23)/month. This year it’s been cut. They both receive 1,200 hrv. ($46)/month on a SmartCard. As a WWII veteran they pay 50% for the apartment. When they asked for a subsidy, they lost the 50%. Yakov has prostate problems and before 2017 he got medicine for it at no cost. Nelli takes medicine for her liver and eye drops, which are very expensive.

They have a daughter in Dnipro - Clara Yakovlevna. There is a grandson in Russia who is also a military officer. He’ll come in July on vacation. Because of the war, they cannot visit one another. They prepared an invitation for the grandson to visit and paid 200 hrv. ($8). They promised to cover all food and health expenses for him. He is married and has two children, a son, Vladimir, and a daughter, Susha.
They have patronnage service every weekday for three hours three days and two hours for two days. Patronnage does everything - shops, cooks, cleans and she’s a nurse, too. Nelli had shingles and spent three weeks in the hospital.

Gift from Adopt-a-Bubbe: cabbage, bananas, sugar, rice, butter, macaroni, tea, cookies 5 oranges, 2 lemons, meat chicken, buckwheat. It cost 450 hrv.($17).

E. Second home visit with Vitaly Laufer and his son Gennady, an invalid first class. Vitaly was born in 1937 in Novomoskovsk and is 81 years old. Gennady was born in 1965 and has a mental disability. He was sleeping during our visit, but is able to walk and move around. He was disabled at birth. He is under the care of a psychiatrist. Vitaly’s wife died three years ago. She was born in 1928 and died of old age.

Lyudmila Laufer was also present. She was married to Vitaly’s brother who died in August, 1997, from kidney disease. He had an operation and then died. Lyudmila’s pension is 1,900 hrv.($73)/month. She has her own separate home and needs to pay for gas heat in the winter for 3,500 hrv.($135). She lives with her son and daughter-in-law so there is no subsidy for living alone. She does not have a Chesed SmartCard or patronnage service. Lyudmila sometimes brings food for Vitaly and Vitaly also cooks. He’s a good cook and lives independently. He also cleans. He used to work at a metal factory on a press.

Vitaly was evacuated with his mother to Krasnovarsky Krai. His mother was educated in an orphanage and had four children - two brothers and a sister. All have since died.

Vitaly had a Chesed SmartCard for 800 hrv.($31)/month. It used to be much higher. Gennady’s pension is 3,300 hrv.($127) for an invalid first class. Chesed now gives a SmartCard with no balance on it.

Gift from Adopt-a-Bubbe: meat, tinned fish, milk, a drink, butter, cooking oil, rice, macaroni, tea, 2 lemons, cookies.

XIV. Our last night in Dnipro we celebrated Yakov Sidelkovsky’s 71st birthday at a restaurant.