

## Lev Dubinski With His Granddaughter Sasha



I and my granddaughter Sasha in the park. Amateur photo. Kiev, 2001.

In 1984 I retired, but at times I worked at Energosetproject under an employment agreement before 1993. In 1990 my wife Elena died at the age of 75. We lived together for 51 years. We celebrated our golden wedding. I was a lucky man: I had a good wife, good family and interesting work. Regretfully, the end of my life is sad. I am limited in my interests. I do not subscribe to newspapers and I don't go to the cinema: I can't afford it. I am careful about my old TV set that I bought in 1970s: if something goes wrong I won't be able to have it repaired. It is depressing to think about what tomorrow has in stock for me. Life becomes more expensive: the apartment fee is

1.5 times higher than it used to be. I receive a small pension. My daughters offer their support, but this alienates us to some extent. They know I don't like it when they offer their help and they can feel it. My health condition leaves much to be desired: I have hypertension and ischemic disease of the heart. I need expensive medications, but I can't afford to buy them. There is a privilege for veterans of the war to receive free medications, but in the recent years I've only received them twice. Since 1984 I stayed in the military hospital only once. Social insurance agency arranged a course of recreation and I went to a recreation center once. There is a governmental order that veterans of the war can go to recreation centers once a year for free and if they choose not to they can have monetary reimbursement, but the insurance agency explained to me that they receive smaller allowances with every passing year. They don't have any reimbursement money and they don't have a possibility to send me to recreation center. Before the 50th anniversary of victory the veterans' committee gave me two envelopes to mail greetings to my fellow comrades and a piece of butter for food package. In the past they had a store with lower prices for veterans of the war. Now it is an ordinary store and some prices are even higher than in other shops. People have become more aggressive and less sociable. In the past neighbors were like friends coming to see each other or share little things. Now, every one sticks to his cell caring only about how to survive. Nobody comes to see me and I do not go out. I cannot afford to have guests and, besides, everyone is busy doing their own things. My fellow comrades are gone. There are few of us left, but we hardly ever meet. The only pleasant thing is a nearby library where I go to borrow books.

After my wife, Elena died I live with Elena [granddaughter] and Yuri [son in law]. My daughters are good to me, but they cannot provide any significant support. I pray for them to be able to carry on. I have a sweet great-granddaughter Sasha, Michael's daughter, born in 1994. We spend much time together taking a walk in the park and playing. In recent years I've received assistance from Hesed: they deliver food packages to old people and sometimes they provide medications for free. There is also a recreation center where we can stay. I am glad they care about us, old Jewish people. I celebrate birthdays of my close people and a calendar New Year. I haven't turned to observing Jewish traditions or celebrating Jewish holidays since it is too late to change habits at my age.