

Introduction

Raisa Moroz and Richard Fenwick believe passionately that we must never forget. This collection of stories, written by Survivors in Southern Arizona, is possible because of that shared commitment, respect and friendship, and their unique combination of expertise and life experience.

The Moroz family immigrated to the United States from Belarus in 1996 because of rampant anti-Semitism in what was then the Soviet Union. Raisa, her husband Valeriy, their two daughters, and her in-laws were aided by HIAS, an organization that rescues people whose lives are in danger for being who they are. Raisa's parents and other family members joined them later. Along with hundreds of others from many countries, the family became U.S. citizens in 2001.

Jewish Family and Children's Services of Southern Arizona helped the Moroz family make this challenging transition. They were resettled by the agency, and Raisa was hired by JFCS for her first job in the U.S. She then joined the Jewish Federation of Southern Arizona staff for almost 12 years. She returned to JFCS in 2009 as a Case Manager for the Holocaust Survivor Program and became the Program Manager a few months later.

Raisa began asking her Russian-speaking clients to pen stories about their lives. She created a list of questions and they began writing. Raisa quickly realized that their stories would not be widely appreciated because of language barriers.

As luck would have it, Richard, a retired USAF Russian linguist, volunteered to partner with Raisa in 2010 to curate a collection of stories from Holocaust Survivors in Southern Arizona. He translated those written in Russian, transcribed verbally recorded stories as the project expanded, and reviewed stories written in English by Survivors from

Western Europe. You will discover these autobiographical stories in this remarkable book.

Richard, a parent and grandparent as well, worked in the defense industry for six years after his Air Force retirement in 2000. He is a musician, writer and poet, and after leaving private industry he gave himself a few years to write, which resulted in a published book of poetry and another on the way. During that time, he also cared for his beloved mother and father.

He discovered JFCS, was introduced to Raisa, and her story project became their project, flourishing in the process. Richard also visits weekly with Russian-speaking Survivors, helps them with day-to-day translation needs, and provides logistics for group events. He loves the “work” and quickly developed great affection for the Survivors and agency staff he has befriended.

Their volunteer partnership continues with an open invitation to other Survivors in Southern Arizona to tell their stories. They look forward to a second edition of this book.

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