



Esther Buncel

Holocaust Survivor

I was born in Czernowitz, then Romania, but now Ukraine. It was occupied by the German army overnight in 1941, when I was a very young child. My older sister and I were taken to the farm of a family friend, and we never saw our family again. Later we were sneaked into the Czernowitz ghetto where we remained until liberated by the Russians at the end of the war. Over the four years we were there, our food consisted of a slice of bread and weak cabbage soup daily – not much for a growing child. We scrounged for food both inside and outside the ghetto, and the adults looked after the children very well.

When the war ended, my sister and I managed to get to Bucharest, to wait for a passage on a boat to Palestine, a wait which took about a year. We arrived in Israel in May 1946. There I was sent to school, learning a new language (Hebrew) and later I went to Teachers' College. My sister was too old for school so went to work. In 1953 I met my husband John at a friend's wedding. We came to Australia in 1956 where I resumed my teaching career, teaching Hebrew, Yiddish and Jewish Studies. We have a son and a daughter.

I joined Courage to Care because I am a story-teller and I feel I must speak for those who cannot. Courage to Care gives me this opportunity to share the idea that one must be positive and help people to survive and improve the lives of others.