



On behalf of the Jewish Educational Loan Fund (JELF), I am pleased to share with you my story. In 1996, my husband, Alex, and I emigrated from the Ukraine to the United States. We were so excited to be here, but the move had come in the midst of our college education. Soon after our arrival, we made the decision to return to school. After seeking and securing loans and scholarships, we realized that we were still several thousand dollars short of what we needed. Though Alex had just started a new job, I had difficulty obtaining work because of my very limited English. On top of all that, we were expecting our first child.

JELF Was There for Us. Having learned about the Jewish Educational Loan Fund (JELF) from a local Jewish communal professional, we both applied for JELF **interest-free** loans for our education and were fortunate to be awarded this support. Alex again was able to pursue his bachelor's degree in computer science, and I enrolled in intensive English courses designed especially for non-native speakers through our local university. Having overcome the language barrier, I was able to pass the necessary tests to be accepted into the master's program in guitar performance at the University of South Carolina. After completing our schooling, I was offered the opportunity to lead the guitar program at the University of North Carolina and Alex obtained a good job in information technology. We also were able to pay off our student loans within one year!

While my story has its own nuances, my path is not uncommon. Many Jewish students are in need of financial aid. ***JELF has received a record number of loan applications for the 2009-2010 school year.***

Will You Join Me in Ensuring that JELF Can Continue to Help Jewish Students? More than ten years have passed since Alex and I received financial support from JELF. We have become self-sufficient and are on our way to achieving our full potential in life. We are deeply grateful for the opportunities we have had and fully believe our achievements are in no small measure because of JELF's support. But our relationship with JELF doesn't end there. For the last five years, Alex and I have been financial supporters of JELF as a way to say thank you and to ensure other students have the opportunity to get where they want to be in life. I hope you will join me in contributing to JELF to ensure that this organization can continue to meet the needs of Jewish students seeking the resources they need to achieve the dream of post-secondary education.

Sincerely,

Marina Alexandra

100% of your gift made between now and July will go directly toward an interest-free loan for a Jewish student for the 2009-2010 school year. Please give today to maximize your impact!

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