

Local News

SUCCESS/Jewish immigrants

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ical Center. "I liked this place," he said. "You can learn things. But always I'm thinking about business."

So while he worked at the hospital, he visited the Lanier Dental Studio. There, he learned about the latest technology and the differences between Russian and American equipment. "I just kind of caught up on some stuff," he said.

About a year ago, Zigelboym purchased lab equipment from the retiring Lanier, who had been in the business for 30 years. Zigelboym kept the same technicians, the same office and, for now, the same name.

The company makes crowns, bridges and does some denture repair. "We make teeth," said Zigelboym.

Many doctors didn't want to deal with a new owner. "The quality of work never changed," Zigelboym said. But "A lot of it is relations."

"It's too early to say about success at this business," he continued. "But we survived. That's the point."

Next month, Zigelboym plans to change the name of his studio, perhaps to "Phoenix Dental Studio."

The phoenix is a bird from Greek mythology which threw itself into fire and rose from the flame. "We fire porcelain," said Zigelboym.

He still works a few shifts a month at Truman Medical Center.

Grodzinsky also went back to school, starting with classes at the Johnson County Community College. She later graduated from radiology school and became a radiologic technician.

She now works for Diagnostic Imaging Center, an independent radiology group, giving X-rays and mamograms. She said she might continue to study for other work in her field.

Dreams come true

A few weeks ago, the family moved into their new house in Overland Park.

"It's very beautiful," said Grodzinsky.

"I love the backyard. It has a lot of trees. So you can just look at the trees and dream about something."

The house has little furniture, "But it's OK," she said. "It's not important

right now." One empty room is where she hopes to someday have a grand piano.

The house is near Congregation Beth Torah, where the family are all members. Rabbi Mark Levin was extremely understanding, said Grodzinsky.

"There was a time when we could not even afford to be members," she said.

Grodzinsky said Susana, now 12, loves the synagogue. Susana plans to attend Harmony Middle School

next fall. This summer she will attend a Jewish summer camp. Next summer, she will become a Bat Mitzvah.

Grodzinsky said her daughter learned English quickly and is the most Americanized of all the family.

"We still insist to speak Russian at home," she said.

As for her mother, Sofia, "She is the most supportive person in my life. For all of us," said Grodzinsky. Although it doesn't seem very American, the couple loves living with Sofia.

Grodzinsky spoke of the family's plans. "We are planning to go to Israel next year, finally, to see our relatives which we have not seen for six years," she said.

"It really broke our hearts when they left Russia for Israel and we left Russia for here."

Throughout everything, said Grodzinsky, she and her husband never fought. "He's a great husband and a friend of mine," she said.

Grodzinsky hopes her daughter will learn from her family's story. "I might write a book," she said. "But still, I'm not a writer. I'm a dreamer."

"I always try to teach Susana to dream," she said. "Because without a dream, it's not a life. But sometimes those dreams come true."



INA GRODZINSKY