



Women in God's Service

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms."

I Peter 4:10

## Liliya McCoy

Liliya McCoy is at home in Broken Arrow, far from the home in the Republic of Kazakhstan where she grew up. She first came here as an exchange student in 1997 and was welcomed into the home of Bert and Jan McCoy. After her allotted year here she went home determined to come back to attend college. It took a few months to get papers in order before she could return as a student at Tulsa Community College.


She completed work for her degree in mathematics at Northeastern State University.

When she came to live with the McCoy's, their son Gary was away at college. After she came back to Oklahoma to enter school, the two began dating and she became Mrs. Gary McCoy in May of 2000. They are the parents of seven-year-old Kate and Anna who recently celebrated her fourth birthday. In late December the McCoy's are expecting the birth of their third daughter.

Liliya grew up in times where organized religion was not allowed. Her grandmother was a believer and planted that seed in her young granddaughter. When Liliya was eight years old her grandmother passed away but the seed of belief grew with the child. At the McCoy home she was exposed to the Bible and teachings that made sense to her. "I knew I believed but just needed to study the Bible," she explains. She made her decision and Lee Wills of the Memorial Drive Church of Christ in Tulsa baptized her.

Today her own little girls are growing up in an atmosphere very different from the way she grew up in her native country. When Communism fell in 1986 her country went from one regime to another before stabilizing as an independent country, apart from the USSR. She says her whole world tumbled around her in 1986. The subject matter taught in her school changed with each regime. It was very difficult to keep up with the changes in the classroom.

Changes at school were accompanied by tough economic times - soap, toilet paper, sugar, flour and other items were scarce and expensive. "It was tough but the people are tough, they are survivors," she notes.



Hi,  
Liliya!  
It's good  
to know  
you!

When asked about her hobbies, Liliya says that she would have to say the main one was running after her children. But she adds that she likes to read, mostly mystery, suspense and detective stories.

She enjoys cooking with two of her native dishes being her favorites. She loves meat balls but they are very different from the traditional Italian ones. Another special dish is the traditional national Russian dish, Pelmeny. This consists of dumplings stuffed with meat served with butter and sour cream, daughter Kate's absolute favorite. When it comes to American food Liliya loves a good homemade chicken noodle soup.

When Liliya left home, her brother was eight years old. Now he is 22 and "no longer little," she notes. He lives with their mother as he works to save money for a car and independent living quarters. With high inflation, Liliya says it takes careful planning and saving for major purchases. She calls her mother often and can e-mail home as they now have a computer in Kazakhstan.

Liliya would like for her mother to come to Oklahoma but her mother is apprehensive about making the trip, since she does not understand English.

The McCoys, including Kate, visited Liliya's family in 2008 and that trip back to her home was really "cool" for the Oklahomans.

Liliya's someday goal is to teach math at the college level, after her children are older and she completes her master's degree.

*Roberta Parker*