



- *Sheila D. of Baldwinsville, N.Y. started smoking at age 15 and stopped at age 55*
- *NYS Smokers' Quitline and SUNY Upstate Medical University provided coaching and support*
- *Quit Coaches are available for any NYS resident looking to quit nicotine-use for the New Year*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CENTRAL NEW YORK WOMAN BECOMES SMOKE-FREE WITH SUPPORT FROM QUITLINE

Local tobacco cessation program also instrumental for success



BALDWINSVILLE, N.Y. – Jan. 2, 2020 – Those wishing to make a stop-smoking New Year's resolution successful can look to Sheila D. of Baldwinsville, N.Y. for inspiration. With assistance from the New York State Smokers' Quitline (Quitline) as well as a local tobacco cessation program through SUNY Upstate Medical University (Upstate Medical), Sheila began a smoke-free journey in September 2018 that continues to this day.

Like many former smokers, Sheila, now 57, spent her childhood in a smokers' household and dabbled with cigarettes at age 11 before becoming a regular smoker at age 15. Aside from being smoke-free during pregnancy, Sheila felt dependent on nicotine for most of her life. Then, in 2018, Sheila underwent a surgery at Upstate Medical in Syracuse, N.Y. and was introduced to the organization's [tobacco cessation program](#). Theresa Hankin, a tobacco treatment specialist with the program, not only supported Sheila to become smoke-free but also referred her to the Quitline.

“The coaches at the Quitline and Upstate Medical were enthusiastic and nonjudgmental, and they never made me feel embarrassed or ashamed about being a smoker,” Sheila said. “I learned how to keep delaying the use of cigarettes as part of the process to become smoke-free. With all the tools and support I received, I was able to choose to stop.”

Sheila connected with the Quitline to discuss her triggers and develop a customized quit-plan. Shortly thereafter, she received a starter kit with nicotine gum and helpful literature. Although she encountered difficulty using the gum due to teeth fillings, Sheila said the advice and encouragement from both the Quitline and Upstate Medical gave her the strength to persevere.

“It’s very important to have a support system during the quit-process,” Sheila said. “The coaches have so much experience to share and help me think about things in ways I might not otherwise consider on my own. I’m grateful they’re always there if I need extra guidance.”

Sheila enjoys the freedom that comes with living smoke-free. “I used to hide smoking from people,” she said. “I was angry about constantly having to light up a cigarette and the expense associated with it. Today, I feel incredibly positive about so many aspects of my life. When I pass by others who smoke, I smile and think to myself: ‘That’s not me anymore.’”

For all those looking to become smoke-free, Sheila recommends connecting with the Quitline and a local cessation program. She also advises smokers to consider the smoke-free journey as a process and a choice rather than simply saying “I have to quit.”

“Cigarettes are so addictive – there will be challenges and possibly slip-ups during the journey,” Sheila said. “But don’t give up. There’s a tool out there that’s going to work for you. **Choose to become smoke-free, because it’s the best gift you can give to yourself and your family.**”

This New Year and any year, in addition to support from a healthcare professional, tobacco users can call the New York State Smokers’ Quitline at **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487) anytime the journey gets tough for achieving or maintaining a tobacco-free life. In addition, as [recently announced](#) by the New York State Department of Health, the Quitline now offers expanded services to help e-cigarette users quit vaping. Coaching support at the Quitline is available for New Yorkers of all ages, including adolescents, seven days a week beginning at 9 a.m. Additional resources are available online at www.nysmokefree.com.

About the New York State Smokers' Quitline

The New York State Smokers' Quitline is a service of the New York State Department of Health and based at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in Buffalo, N.Y. It is one of the first and busiest state quitlines in the nation and has responded to nearly 3 million calls since it began operating in 2000. The Quitline encourages nicotine users to talk with their healthcare professionals and access available Medicaid or health insurance benefits for stop-smoking medications. All New York State residents can call **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487) for coaching and resources, free of charge, seven days a week beginning at 9 a.m. Visit www.nysmokefree.com for more information.

About Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center is a community united by the drive to eliminate cancer's grip on humanity by unlocking its secrets through personalized approaches and unleashing the healing power of hope. Founded by Dr. Roswell Park in 1898, it is the only National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center in Upstate New York. Learn more at www.roswellpark.org, or contact us at 1-800-ROSWELL (1-800-767-9355) or ASKRoswell@roswellpark.org.

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