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- *Tracy K. quit smoking in 2008 with support from the New York State Smokers' Quitline*
- *Coaching, medication and encouragement from family helped Tracy K. finally quit for good*
- *After 10 years of being smoke-free, the benefits are dramatic and palpable*

THE BEST ANNIVERSARY EVER: 10 YEARS SMOKE-FREE

Western New York resident Tracy K. wants to be an inspiration to those looking to quit smoking for the New Year

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Dec. 21, 2018 – As the New Year approaches, a common resolution tops many tobacco-users' to-do lists: making 2019 the year they finally quit for good. Smoking is an addiction and difficult to overcome, but thousands achieve a smoke-free life each year with support and medication from their healthcare providers and the New York State Smokers' Quitline. One Western New Yorker knows this very well, as Tracy K. of Blasdell just celebrated 10 years of freedom from nicotine.

Tracy (*pictured*), now 55, said she began smoking as a teen because she wanted to "be with the cool kids" and because her mother smoked. She said quitting is one of the hardest things she ever accomplished but also something of which she's proudest. Tracy twice quit for extended stretches when having children, but became tempted to pick up cigarettes when hanging around others who smoked.



"Smoking is such a strong habit and it connects with the activities you do," Tracy said. "Calling the New York State Smokers' Quitline, hearing a friendly voice on the other end of the phone and then receiving the nicotine patch finally did it for me. The patch worked to stop the cravings. I stopped feeling the urge to smoke, and that made all the difference. After I received the package and educational materials for free, I felt an obligation not to let the Quit Coach down. I had to give it a try."

Tracy said support from her family members also played a major role in success. She now exercises regularly, in part as a way to replace old habits but also because she can breathe better and has increased endurance. Tracy feels a profound sense of freedom and loves "not smelling like a cigarette" around others. She encourages current smokers to continue trying to quit and to reorganize their existing habits and activities.

"Don't stop trying – you don't know which attempt will finally be the right time," Tracy said. "It's like Heaven to never think about smoking again. It was a burden, and now I don't have to carry that weight around. When you quit smoking, you'll feel like you can do anything."

The New York State Smokers' Quitline is available as a free resource for all New Yorkers seeking help to quit smoking. Quit Coaches can provide personalized coaching support and check eligibility for a starter kit of nicotine replacement therapy. In addition, the New York State Smokers' Quitline recommends smokers talk to their healthcare providers about quitting and ask for a prescription for stop-smoking medications – most of which are covered by health insurance plans.

"Smoking continues to be the leading cause of preventable death in the world, but many free resources are available in New York State to help smokers quit," said Kimberly Bank, RN, program coordinator for Health Systems for a Tobacco-Free Western New York, based at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in Buffalo. "By combining coaching and medication, the odds for quitting successfully increase threefold. Healthcare providers play a major role in getting the process started, between prescribing the right medications and making referrals to the New York State Smokers' Quitline for added support. Health plans, especially Medicaid, often cover extra nicotine replacement therapy and local cessation classes. Quitting smoking is the best thing you can do for your health, so use all the benefits available to make it happen."

This New Year and any year, smokers should 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 smoke-free life. Quit Coaches are available seven days a week beginning at 9 a.m., and 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. It is one of the first and busiest state quitlines in the nation, and has responded to more than 2.5 million calls since its inception in 1999. The Quitline encourages tobacco users to talk with their healthcare providers 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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