



A FIRST BREATH SUCCESS STORY



By Keisha Rovick

ST CROIX COUNTY - "I want to quit for good," said Brook, 23, of Roberts. Brook quit while she was pregnant with her first child, who is now 4 years old. However, she started smoking again after her son was born. She got up to smoking a pack a day, but step by step she is cutting back to reach her final goal of totally quitting. Now, 20 weeks into her second pregnancy Brook smokes only three cigarettes a day and plans on cutting out the cigarette she smokes in the middle of the day. "I know that is bad for my baby and my health, so I know I need to quit," Brook said.

Brook heard about the *First Breath* program when Sharon Reyzer, public health nurse at the St. Croix County Department of Health and Human Services, made her first home visit with Brook. "Sharon told me about the program and gave me the brochures. I decided the program would give me the extra help I would need to quit," Brook said.

Although Brook has only been in the *First Breath* program for three weeks, she thinks it is very helpful and a great program for women. "I was already cutting back on my own, but *First Breath* gives me the extra support that keeps me moving toward my goal of quitting for good. Now when people ask if I am going to quit smoking, I can say yes and that I'm even in a program," said Brook.

Along with the support from Reyzer, Brook's eyes have been opened to some of the harmful effects of smoking and the many benefits of quitting. For example, Brook said she was amazed at how many dangerous chemicals were in cigarettes. Also, Brook was thrilled to learn of the immediate health benefits of quitting smoking. "I was excited to read that after 3 weeks of quitting I will be able to breathe easier. I've had problems with being out of breath – and it's not just because I'm pregnant!"

Simple things like chewing on red licorice and sucking on popsicles help Brook stay on track with her quit attempt. "If I just keep busy, I don't smoke. Also, when I drive I don't keep cigarettes in the car and that has really helped."

Fighting a 10 year addiction to cigarettes has been hard, but Brook is glad to have the support of her husband, who has also cut back on his smoking. Brook said her husband used to smoke one pack of cigarettes everyday, but he has cut down to half a pack and does most of his smoking while at work, keeping most of the secondhand smoke away from Brook and their baby.

Brook said she has been really impressed by the *First Breath* program and all of the help it provides women who are trying to quit. "I have wanted to quit and now I have a great excuse to do it. I really believe that with the help of *First Breath* I can quit smoking forever," Brook said.