



# A FIRST BREATH SUCCESS STORY



By Stan Milam

**ONEIDA** - After smoking since she was 18, Carmela Oshkeshequoam, 31, of Green Bay, wants to quit---for good.

Carmela is pregnant with her fourth child. She receives prenatal care at the Oneida Community Health Center located just a few miles west of her home in Green Bay. She was never a heavy smoker (four to six cigarettes a day) and now smokes just one a day.

The *First Breath* program is an opportunity for her to finally give up the habit altogether, Carmela said.

"Smoking is not appealing to me," she said. "It's not something I want to do, especially while I'm pregnant, but I've never been able to quit."

Carmela's husband, David, smokes a pack of cigarettes a day, but he's supportive of her efforts to quit.

"David has stopped smoking in the house, and I get encouragement from the kids," Carmela said. "My 5-year-old tells me smoking will make my lungs turn black."

Carmela has volunteered for the *First Breath* program to ensure a healthy baby, but there are other incentives she started to consider after a few sessions with Aimee Schneiderhan, a nutritionist with the Special Supplement Nutrition Program for Women with Infants and Children, (WIC), and Sue Derksen, the prenatal care coordinator at the Oneida Center.

"When you stop and think about it, there are all kinds of reason to stop smoking," Carmela said. "The price is way too high. It's something like \$4.20 a pack."

"I now take that money and put it into a savings," she said. "I've learned through a budgeting class that I can save \$60 to \$100 a month."

The *First Breath* program and the Oneida Center team up for additional activities and strategies to help clients stop smoking. In Carmela's case, access to exercise is a plus.

"They have provided us with passes to the fitness center and that helps a lot," Carmela said. "I've learned a lot of things that help, such as just drinking more water and going for walks."

Carmela said her goal is to stop smoking and to deliver another healthy baby.

"But, I'd also like to stop smoking for myself," she said. "It's not something I look forward to every day, and it's expensive."

Schneiderhan said she's encouraged by Carmela's progress.

"The fact that she's cut back is very encouraging," Schneiderhan said. "We are now at that point where there's real hope that she can quit and stay tobacco free. *First Breath* gives us an opportunity to continue that effort through delivery and into postnatal care."