



A FIRST BREATH SUCCESS STORY



By Stan Milam

MADISON—At 9-years-old, Danielle had her first cigarette and was smoking heavily by the time she was 15. “Everybody around me was smoking. My mom and most of my friends smoked and I got up to smoking about a pack a day,” she said.

Danielle, now 21, didn’t find out she was pregnant until she was already two months into her pregnancy. “As soon as I found out I was pregnant, I wanted to quit smoking,” Danielle said.

Danielle immediately started cutting back and giving herself limits on how many cigarettes she could smoke each day. Gradually, she smoked fewer and fewer cigarettes until she had quit. However, after 11 days of not smoking, Danielle started up again.

That’s when she heard about First Breath. Danielle attributes her current success in quitting to the help she has gotten from First Breath and her public health nurse. “Susan always says she is amazed that I haven’t smoked a cigarette for four months, even with all the stress in my life. But, really the most help I have gotten is from Susan because she is always there for me when I need her,” Danielle said.

Smoking had become somewhere to turn when things went bad. “I used to always smoke when I was upset about anything and everything. It seemed to help me calm down and relax a little.” But, now Danielle feels like she can turn to Susan when she needs somebody to talk to. “I talk to Susan at least once a week. She calls me and I call her. I really don’t think I could have quit without Susan,” Danielle said.

Through First Breath, Danielle has learned about the tragic health consequences of smoking during pregnancy and wants to give her son the healthiest start possible. “I feel like the least I can do is quit smoking so he will have everything going for him. I know things can go wrong, but I know that I have done everything that I can to help him be a healthy baby from the start,” Danielle said.

Eight months into her pregnancy, Danielle feels really good about the decision she made to quit smoking for her health and for the health of her baby. “I’m going to tell my son how much First Breath helped me quit. I’m going to tell my baby about this his whole life.”