



A FIRST BREATH SUCCESS STORY



By Beth Turner



SHEBOYGAN COUNTY—To see how far two-time mom Toni has come, you need to know where she started.

Smoking was a way of life. Her family smoked, and she started at age 14. Her habit only intensified when at age 20 she started driving a big rig for a living. Smoking gave her something to do on the long hauls. Two packs a day would get her through.

After getting married and pregnant, her habit did not lessen. Toni's first daughter, now 2 years old, was born a healthy 8-pounds. "No problem," Toni thought. Until her daughter developed asthma. Toni says she knows now that her little girl's health condition had something to do with her choice to smoke.

After Toni learned she was pregnant again- and still smoking a pack and a half a day- Toni said, "I want to quit. My mind is set." Toni's sister-in-law told her about the First Breath Program. Toni enrolled and became accountable. But not until her third trimester. Toni went from more than a pack a day to three to five cigarettes a day. By the time she got down to two a day she thought, "This is not worth it! Just throw them out!" And she did. Her second daughter was born and is now 1-month old, and Toni has not put a cigarette to her lips in more than a month.

"Everything tastes better. I have so much more energy!"

According to Toni, First Breath helped her change her focus and equipped her with quitting tactics. She used to reach for cigarettes whenever she felt stressed out. Toni says First Breath helped her realize that she would always have some stress and there are better ways of handling it than smoking. Singing for instance!

"Cigarettes changed my voice, my ability to breathe and hold notes. Now I can sing in the shower, in the car. It's easier to breath and hold notes." Toni has found a natural stress reliever! And entertainment for herself and her little girls.

With a renewed sense of health, Toni wants to go back to writing music and playing the guitar; elements of her life left untouched for more than 4 years. Toni's not only rediscovered her singing voice, but another voice as well. She is also the one that will now ask family members to step outside instead of smoking in front of her and her children. The same voice recently told her husband, "Maybe we'll have another baby, a boy this time. I've stopped (smoking) now and will stay quit for the third."