

Press Release

Helen wants to spread the word

October 1, 2008

Helen Simmons was so thrilled at giving up smoking with Hampshire's Quit4Life stop smoking service that she's now training to be a Q4L adviser herself.

Helen, 42, from Waterlooville, had been smoking since the age of 12 and despite many attempts had come to the conclusion that she was never going to be able to give up.



"I work as a health adviser for people with obesity problems and I just felt that I should be able to do it by myself," said Helen. "I'd go to sessions for the first week or two then stop going, and before long I was smoking again.

"I knew a lady who had been smoking 40 a day for 50 years and she managed to quit – I decided I didn't want to be a smoker in my old age and it had to be now or never."

Helen started attending Quit4Life support sessions at Waterlooville Community Centre and forced herself to attend every week for 12 weeks. She set a quit date of 13 November 2007 and hasn't had a single puff since.

"The support from Q4L made all the difference," she said. "Talking to someone who understands what you are going through was brilliant. Sylvia, my adviser, made me realise that I was giving up a habit and that helped to put a new perspective on it - it was like a kind of loss."

Helen changed her diet, eating smaller meals and snacks more often and using fruit to stave off any cravings. Whenever she felt stressed she got out the colouring books and crayons and with the help of chewing gum managed to doodle her addiction away.

She is both relieved and overjoyed to have given up cigarettes for good. “It’s nearly a year now and it’s amazing – I feel so much better about myself. I love the fact that I’m not a smoker any more, that I don’t feel irritable and that I’m not always feeling anxious about when I can have the next cigarette. I’m saving £30 to £40 a week and I feel much healthier. The best experience was on new year’s eve – everyone was making resolutions they wouldn’t keep and for the first time in years I didn’t have to make one because I’d already done it. It felt great.”

Helen’s children, Oliver, 16, and Abigail, 13, are vehemently anti-smoking so they’re also very happy that she’s quit.

“They are so proud of me and they say it all the time,” she said. “Going through the process with Quit4Life has made all the difference to me and that’s why I want to help others in the same situation. I would say to anyone that if you can come in every week for 12 weeks you will get over all the hurdles and be free of cigarettes for good. It came right for me and it can come right for other people, if they get the appropriate support.”

Hampshire’s Stop Smoking Service is available to everyone by calling 0845 602 4663, texting QUIT to 60123 or by referral from your GP or any health professional. Sessions are run by professional smoking cessation advisers, who can give out free stop smoking medication

Anyone who quits with the help of Hampshire’s Quit4Life support service is four times more likely to succeed. People who want to give up can either ring the service direct on 0845 602 4663 or be referred by their GP or other health professional. There is a wide range of flexible support, at times and locations to suit everyone. Quit4Life advisers have wide experience of helping people to quit smoking and understand the difficulties as well as the support required to successfully quit.

For more advice on stopping smoking go to www.quit4life.nhs.uk.

For further information please contact the Communications Team on 023 8062 7434.