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OKLAHOMA SMOKERS WHO QUIT FOR ONE DAY CAN QUIT FOR LIFE

Free Coaching by Phone and Free Patches or Gum Help Oklahomans Quit for Good

OKLAHOMA CITY (Nov. 15, 2010) – On Nov. 18, thousands of Oklahoma tobacco users will find themselves right where Cindy Lea and Shane Sellers were in 2008 – wanting to quit smoking and looking for the right time to do it. Using the Great American Smokeout as their quit date, the Tahlequah, Okla., couple gave up their cigarettes for an hour, then a day, and now, they have been smoke-free for two years.

“At \$5-a-day between us, we were just tired of the expense,” said Cindy Lea. “And, the health risks with smoking are really sobering. When you see visuals of the lungs of people who’ve spent a lifetime smoking, it’s just awful to think that may be happening to you or someone you love. Plus, Shane’s kids always wanted us to quit and when we did, they were super proud of us. Their support really made it all worth doing.”

November 18 marks the 35th Anniversary of the American Cancer Society’s Great American Smokeout. Oklahomans who are ready to quit tobacco for a day or for life are encouraged to make a plan and get support. Support can be a spouse, friends, your physician or professional quit coaches from the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). Free coaching, patches or gum are available.

For Cindy Lea and Shane, they used each other as support. They announced their intention to quit to a public audience through their jobs as radio personalities in Tahlequah at Lakes Country 102.1.

“We made a public announcement that we were going to quit and we set our date for the Great American Smokeout,” said Cindy Lea. “We prepared in advance and made sure we were in a good place both mentally and physically, since that is often a key hurdle that prevents you from quitting.”

Almost immediately after quitting, smokers start to experience the benefits of being tobacco free. According to the American Cancer Society, within 20 minutes of quitting, blood pressure decreases and pulse rate drops. Within a day, oxygen level in blood returns to normal and the chance of a heart

attack decreases significantly. Other important health benefits follow and within a year of quitting, the risk of coronary heart disease is lowered to half of that of a smoker.

“I won’t lie. That first month was a bit of a rollercoaster, but we did whatever it took to keep our minds off smoking,” said Cindy Lea. “We took walks to relieve our stress levels and I even took a straw and cut it in half and “smoked” it if I really needed to do something with my hands.”

When asked about the economic benefits of quitting smoking, Cindy Lea and Shane were very happy with the results.

“For the first 6 weeks, we took \$5 every day and put it in a jar. It was definitely a visual reminder to us of the impact that our smoking was having on our finances. In the last two years, we’ve used our ‘savings’ from smoking to remodel our house and adopt four dogs, so I think that part of it has worked out pretty well.”

ABOUT THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT

“For more than 30 years, the Great American Smokeout has been a day set aside to celebrate those who have given up tobacco for good and to encourage current smokers to quit,” said Tracey Strader, TSET executive director. “Quitting tobacco isn’t easy, but with support from friends, family, your physician and resources like the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline, now is the perfect time to set a quit date and start experiencing the benefits of better breathing.”

The Helpline is funded by TSET (Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust), the Oklahoma State Department of Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Last year, the Helpline served more than 37,000 Oklahomans.

The Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline operates seven days a week. Services are available to Oklahomans who smoke as well as those who use other tobacco products. Services are also available in Spanish by calling 1-800-793-1552. For more information about the Helpline, go to: www.ok.gov/tset/Programs/Helpline.html. For more information about quitting tobacco use go to: www.smokefree.gov.

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TSET, a constitutional endowment trust committed to improving the health of the Oklahomans, was created by an overwhelming majority vote of the people in 2000. The foresight of Oklahoma voters is beginning to make a substantial

impact through community grants, in combination with the other research and programs funded by TSET, including the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline (1-800-QUIT-NOW). Funding from TSET will be available to create better lives through better health for generations to come. To learn more go to: www.tset.ok.gov.

Editor – Potential Sidebar Information:

Make a Plan to Quit Tobacco – for FREE

Call the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW to work with a Quit Coach on the best quit plan for you. The call is free, the coaching is free and right now registered callers can receive a free 2-week Starter Kit of nicotine patches or gum.

Five Day Countdown

Start by making your home and vehicle a tobacco free zone.

5 Days Before Your Quit Date

Think about your reasons for quitting. Write them down.
Tell your friends and family you are planning to quit.
Stop buying cigarettes

4 Days Before Your Quit Date

Pay attention to when and why you smoke.
Think of other things to hold in your hand instead of a cigarette
Think of habits or routines to change.

3 Days Before Your Quit Date

What will you do with the extra money when you stop buying cigarettes? Make a list.
Think about who you can contact when you need help.

2 Days Before Your Quit Date

Buy the nicotine patch or nicotine gum
Or visit your doctor to get the nicotine inhaler, nasal spray, or the non-nicotine pill

(Continued)

1 Day Before Your Quit Date

Put away lighters and ashtrays.
Destroy all cigarettes and matches.
Clean your clothes to get rid of the smell of cigarette smoke

Quit Day

Think of yourself as a non-smoker
Remind family and friends that this is your quit day.
Stay away from alcohol.
Do something special for yourself

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Save Money

The average price for a pack of cigarettes in Oklahoma is approximately \$4.80
At a pack a day, that adds up to about \$1752 a year. Over ten years, that's \$17,520.

Save Time

On average it takes 7 minutes to smoke a cigarette. At a pack a day, that's just over 2 hours and 20 minutes. Over ten years, that's 354 days, or almost one entire year spent smoking.