

SMOKEFREE... it's about us

KIA AUAAHI KORE... mō tātou te kaupapa



Karmin Erueti-Thatcher

Smokefree/Auahi Kore
DHB Co-ordinator

Taranaki DHB's new Smokefree-Auahi Kore Co-ordinator knows how hard it can be to quit smoking.

Karmin Erueti-Thatcher used to be a smoker, so she is well aware of the struggle to give up the addictive habit.

Giving into peer pressure, her first puff was at the age of 14. She stopped smoking two years later when she became pregnant and while she was breastfeeding, but the addiction was still strong and Karmin returned to cigarettes when her baby was weaned.

Karmin says a particularly difficult time was when she was working as a fitness instructor. She kept her smoking secret from clients and workmates, because she felt smoking conflicted with the health focus of her job. She classed herself as an "emotional smoker" and only lit up out of work hours. "I was always very conscious of the smell of smoke, and had my own little ritual so people wouldn't notice it," she recalls.

Over the years, Karmin attempted to quit three times without success. It took a serious health scare for her husband to finally provide the motivation to try to give up once and for all. Karmin's husband had a major heart attack on Valentine's Day six years ago, aged just

31. While smoking wasn't the sole cause, it was certainly a contributing factor. Doctors told him he had to give up "if he wanted to see his 40th birthday".

Supporting her husband, Karmin joined him in signing up for the "Quit For Kids" smoking cessation programme, which was run by the Taranaki DHB. The programme involved Nicotine replacement therapy, motivational counselling and ongoing support, enough to free Karmin from her 12-year addiction to tobacco.

Karmin says being a former smoker gives her a better understanding what people may be experiencing while trying to quit. "Smoking tobacco is an addiction, and quitting will probably be the hardest thing you'll ever do, but also the most rewarding."

Like the saying goes, if at first you don't succeed try, try and try again.

**Mā te rongo, ka mōhio; Mā te mōhio, ka mārama;
Mā te mārama, ka mātau; Mā te mātau, ka ora.**

Through resonance comes cognisance; through cognisance comes understanding; through understanding comes knowledge; through knowledge comes life and well-being.

