



***NOTE TO MEDIA:** Nearly a dozen "Success Stories" and downloadable photos for different regions of New York State are available at the Quitline's Online News Room: <https://nysmokefree.com/newsroom>. Inspirational New Yorkers became nicotine-free in 2020 for a variety of reasons: COVID-19 concerns, the birth of a child, improved health, battling cancer and much more. Please reach out to the Quitline any time, any day, for supplemental interviews to enhance your coverage of New Year's resolutions and stories of hope heading into 2021.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW YORK CITY ARTIST PROVIDES INSPIRATION TO BECOME NICOTINE-FREE IN 2021

Despite the challenges of 2020, David K. overcame addictions to smoking and vaping with support from the New York State Smokers' Quitline

NEW YORK – Dec. 31, 2020 – David K., a visual artist living in Upper Manhattan, prefers not to use the word "quit" to describe himself but rather "in the active process of being nicotine-free." He is celebrating 10 weeks and counting of a healthier smoke-free and vape-free lifestyle thanks to support from the New York State Smokers' Quitline (Quitline).



David (*pictured at left*), 38, is originally from the Republic of Georgia. He began smoking at age 19 and quit nine years later in 2010, shortly after relocating to Manhattan. He felt inspired by the city's healthy and walkable environment to become smoke-free and remained that way until 2019. However, his international travel for work brought smoking back into the picture, and the recent COVID-19 pandemic exasperated his addiction to nicotine.

"I had enjoyed being smoke-free, but having just one cigarette with a friend during a 2019 trip to Athens brought it all back," David said. "I switched to vaping and once COVID-19 hit, I began using nicotine more than ever. My energy level and breathing quality was poor. I remembered how good it felt to not smoke or vape and contacted the Quitline for help."

Upon consulting the Quitline in early October and then receiving free nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) in the form of nicotine patches and nicotine gum via mail, David felt empowered to become nicotine-free. He particularly appreciated the fast shipping and follow-up calls to see how he was progressing. While David's cravings have since subsided, he continues to keep a small supply of nicotine gum on hand because he remembers how he "got derailed" in 2019.

"Because I had been traveling so much prior to the pandemic, the real challenge to staying nicotine-free in 2021 will be navigating in-person socialization once everything gets back to normal – but I'm confident I can do it," David said. "The biggest incentive for me to stay nicotine-free is the realization of how many benefits it brings."

David quickly cites a long list of benefits he experiences now that he is once again nicotine-free: better taste, more energy, glowing skin, less stress, easier exercise, a heightened feeling of overall optimism and a sense of freedom. In recent weeks, he has increased his physical activity, particularly through swimming. David hopes his success will inspire others to follow the same path of healthier living.

"One of the most important pieces of advice I can give to others is this: remember your triggers," he said. "You can overcome the physical urges pretty quickly; the psychological urges are much harder. Seeing someone who smokes or vapes could make you instantly think it's 'pleasurable,' but recalling all the great benefits of not smoking or vaping will keep you on track. Think positive – and surround yourself with supportive people."

The Quitline encourages all tobacco and vape-product users to make 2021 their best year ever by becoming nicotine-free, especially in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. According to the CDC, those who smoke [suffer more severe effects](#) if infected with the coronavirus.

The Quitline recommends tobacco and vape-product users consult a healthcare professional as part of a nicotine-free journey. Healthcare professionals can provide referrals to the Quitline for free quit-coaching and free NRT such as nicotine patches and nicotine gum or

lozenges – and nearly all participants are eligible. The Quitline’s Quit Coaches are available seven days a week beginning at 9 a.m. by calling 1-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) beginning at 9 a.m. or by visiting www.nysmokefree.com and requesting a call.

About the New York State Smokers’ Quitline

The New York State Smokers’ Quitline is a service of the New York State Department of Health and based at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center in Buffalo, N.Y. It is one of the first and busiest state quitlines in the nation and has responded to nearly 3 million calls since it began operating in 2000. The Quitline encourages nicotine users to talk with their healthcare professionals and access available Medicaid or health insurance benefits for stop-smoking medications. All New York State residents can call **1-866-NY-QUITS** (1-866-697-8487) for coaching and resources, free of charge, seven days a week beginning at 9 a.m. Visit www.nysmokefree.com for more information.

About Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center is a community united by the drive to eliminate cancer’s grip on humanity by unlocking its secrets through personalized approaches and unleashing the healing power of hope. Founded by Dr. Roswell Park in 1898, it is the only National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center in Upstate New York. Learn more at www.roswellpark.org, or contact us at 1-800-ROSWELL (1-800-767-9355) or ASKRoswell@roswellpark.org.

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