



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT™
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

WHAT'S YOUR Y STORY?

Our YMCA is dynamic community comprised of people from all walks of life, ages, situations and backgrounds. And we all share a passion to improve our health and well-being. We are optimistic that by sharing our Y stories, we can inspire fellow Y members and participants to take that next step, to push a little harder, and to support each other. Together.....we can get there!

If you would like to help inspire others by sharing your Y Story, please contact Debbie Madeley at 815-756-9577 or Email: dmadeley@kishymca.org

Sarah Garman

"Really, if it wasn't for the Y, I don't know where we'd go!"



"I never grew up being active, never played sports, never did much of anything physical. I found myself with two children and a weight problem. Nothing fit and I didn't feel good about myself, and I wanted to be able to play with my kids. I decided it was time to make a change, but didn't know exactly where to start. So, I started by cutting pop out of my diet. That helped a little. I worked towards cutting as much junk out of my diet as possible and that helped more. I added walking and that helped much more. After a month or two of this, I had made some progress and felt inspired to try harder. I tried taking a few classes and used at home work-out videos. I joined the Y and met with Jess and did Commit to be Fit. Jess helped me feel good about myself and how far I'd come and made me feel like I could keep going. It was great positive reinforcement. I didn't make all the meetings, but I was inspired! I signed on for a variety of classes at the Y and got my kids involved. Now things were happening.

Today, I have achieved the original goal of losing weight to feel and look good, though it took a few years to get here. I know I will be around for my boys. The Y has really helped me get here and stay here. The staff is so welcoming and since getting involved

in classes I've met a lot of friends who are supportive and fun as well. I even made friends with a staff member who helped me find a church home. Another member friend is now teaching me to run and I have actually achieved a new goal of running a half marathon. In fact, I ran several this summer! I feel wonderful and my kids feel great when they are here. My boys look up to Dave and all the Activity Center staff. They are learning how to be active so they never have to start from where I did. Really, if it wasn't for the Y, I don't know where we'd go!"

Denise Davis



"I am so grateful that the Y teaches children to swim as early as 6 months. I put my son in right away and he has progressed through the many classes and has learned to swim. This accomplishment has come in handy. When we went on vacation and my four year old son fell into the pool, he was able to save himself because of the skills he learned at the Y. When the life guard jumped in all you could hear was him saying, "kicks and scoops" ..." just like they taught me, mom."

Staff Stories - Cory Page

"...Oh of course I can never leave the Y hanging, it has done so much for me."



Cory Page has been a Y member since he was 8 years old. He joined the DCST swim team that year and continued in the program for 11 years. In the course of his tenure with DCST, Cory was a National YMCA Swimmer 4 times. Cory also participated in summer camp every year through Camp Kish. Cory describes his younger self as a "hyper kid that got into a lot of trouble". He says because of the YMCA, DCST, Summer Camp and especially the caring, adult role models at the YMCA, he has become a calmer, more controlled individual who now knows how to make the right choices. He said he learned all about hard work, determination and responsibility from his experiences at the YMCA. He learned the importance of getting up early and taking responsibility if he wanted to succeed.

"Being on the DCST has taught me the importance of hard work and has given me lifelong friends. I have gone places with DCST that I would never have had the opportunity to go. When I couldn't afford to go to Nationals, even though I qualified, the DCST helped me get there. I will never forget those experiences. I know that the DCST coaches have my best interests at heart and really care about me even when they yell at me to work harder and make smarter choices. I really appreciate all they have done for me. Before my freshman year of high school I had to decide whether I wanted to swim or play soccer. Soccer would have been much easier to do but I knew that the challenge of the swim team would do much more for me. I know I made the right decision."

Cory became a staff member of the YMCA when he turned 16. He feels honored to have been given the position of lifeguard. "Being a lifeguard is a very serious position of responsibility for a 16 year old to have. I am doing so much more than flipping burgers. I am responsible for the safety of everyone who comes into the pool during my shift. I can also build confidence. My Aquatics Director at the time, Marybeth McGill, encouraged the lifeguards to talk to our members to make a connection with them. I took that to heart and started talking to a member who had been coming in the same time every Saturday for months and months. Every time she came in we'd talk a little bit more. One day we started talking about what swimming does for us. She told me she has always wanted to know how to do a flip turn. So I showed her how to do one. Now I see her swim and do flip turns. I feel really great that I could help her. I'm really glad Marybeth encouraged me to make connections with the members."

Cory graduated from high school this June. He plans to attend Kishwaukee College in the fall to study chemistry. In two years he plans to attend the University of Wisconsin/Madison and join the Navy.

Staff Stories – Sue Munz

"...If you wonder if it's worth the time, money and effort to work on asset building; it was worth it for my daughter."

Below Sue shares her Y Story as it relates to the success of her daughter, Tori. Tori will begin Elmhurst College in the Fall and has been invited to be a part of the honors program.



"I believe Tori's outstanding achievements this year have been due to her upbringing as a "Y brat". At a school conference, one of her instructor's remarked how Tori was not only an A student; but that she was caring, empathic, and kind to those kids who were not "cool"; watching over and helping other students who struggled. Her father immediately said "that's because she grew up at the Y and everyone there treats her with respect and so she respects others". My jaw dropped open. I, of course, thought

this, but didn't realize it was so obvious to others. Tori has told me that she wants to be a role model for kids because she had such great role models at the Y.

It takes a village to raise a child, so I would like to thank everyone (past and present) who has cared for, helped, and mentored Tori. If you wonder if it's worth the time, money and effort to work on asset building; it was worth it for my daughter. "

Michael Gordon



"...So maybe even if you don't get to your goal right away, you still feel good about yourself - you know you went out there and gave it your best. ..."

"My name is Michael Gordon. Right now I'm 17 years old and I attend Sycamore High School. I'm a senior this year. I've been a part of the DeKalb County Swim Team here at the YMCA for the past 12 years and it's really influenced my life in a number of ways. First of all, it's greatly affected my goal setting abilities.

Obviously in any competitive sport, the goal is to get out there and prove yourself both in practice and in competition. I think swimming really drives home the point for this. Everyone here on the swim team, whether it's my fellow team mates or my coaches are really supportive and help you achieve your goals as you get to the next level. So maybe even if you don't get to your goal right away, you still feel good about yourself - you know you went out there and gave it your best.

Another thing I love about the swim team and the YMCA in general is the support system we have here. Whether it's the parents, my team mates, the coaches...they're always out there congratulating me when I have a good swim, consoling me when I don't do that great, motivating you in practice, telling you maybe you aren't working that hard today - maybe get up and go a bit harder today - cause they know they're just looking out for your best. And even outside the swim team, just walking in by the front desk, everyone says "hello, how are you doing today" even though I'm in for a two hour swim practice. This helps lighten the load I guess. All the staff members here are great and you can really tell that the YMCA focuses on the core values it sets. It really talks the talk and walks the walk."

More.....

Josh Corn



"...Without the people here I absolutely would not be where I am today. Everyday I wake up completely happy and I have the Y to thank for it."

On December 1, 2009 I weighed 346 pounds, and I decided a change had to be made. So I joined the Y here in DeKalb and that was probably the best decision I ever made. When I started here I was so out of shape that I couldn't do anything other than really swim. Marybeth helped me. She showed me the right way to swim, which turned out to be really good workouts. I was able to go from there and work my way to the wellness center, doing treadmills, doing elliptical. I was having good success then and the staff suggested maybe I start lifting weights....which was also an awesome piece of advice. It was just great from then on out. Without the people here I absolutely would not be where I am today. Everyday I wake up completely happy and I have the Y to thank for it. The people that work here and the people that work out here – it's a group of people that are absolutely amazing and I believe the genuinely care and they want to see you succeed. I don't think there's too many other places around here where you can get that feeling from just complete strangers. They notice when you're not here, they give you encouragement – even people you don't know – and I think that's absolutely amazing. So without the Y, I wouldn't be as happy as I am today. My name is Josh corn and that's my story.

Becky Stezko, Sycamore Life School



Becky with Marc & Jasmine, two of our Life School Volunteers

"...The young adults who volunteer feel good about themselves..."

Our partnership with the YMCA and the impact on young adults who have cognitive disabilities has enriched our program. It has been a win-win collaborative experience. The YMCA's staff has embraced them, learned about their disabilities and best practices

to support them - either as volunteers or those working towards competitive employment. The young adults who volunteer feel good about themselves and are proud to be productive members of our community and enjoy the connection with the staff and members here at the Kishwaukee Family YMCA.

Anonymous Member Submission

How the Kishwaukee Family YMCA Improved my Health

The Kishwaukee Family YMCA has had a positive influence on my health and life. My journey to a healthier self started a few years ago when I met with my doctor to go over the results of a routine physical. He did two things that caught my attention. The first thing he did was point to my weight on the physical form and then pointed over to the word "obese" on a weight control brochure. He didn't say the word "obese," but when he pointed to the word, he said something to the effect of "you are here." The second thing that caught my attention was when he started talking about cholesterol medication since my cholesterol had spiked up to almost 250. After a long discussion with the doctor, we agreed that I would try improving my diet and exercise habits in order to avoid going on medication.

That is where the YMCA comes in. I decided to try a Cardio Cycling class. I love bike riding so this seemed like a great fit. During my first week of class, the instructors all made me feel welcome. They provided positive instruction and upbeat classes. Next thing you know, the Cardio Cycling class was part of my regular routine. When warm weather arrived, I was able to hop on my bike and felt great. I didn't stop going to the Cardio Cycling class, however, since I was having so much fun.

Now fast forward to my next doctor's visit. At first I was a little disappointed when the scale read exactly the same as my previous visit. That's when the doctor said something to the effect of "the scale might not show any changes, but when you are punching new holes in your belt, it shows you are making progress." I was caught off guard by this, but he was right. My belt had been getting too loose over the previous months, so I punched a couple of new holes so I could tighten it up. I was shocked that he actually noticed that! But that wasn't the best news. When the doctor pulled out the blood work results, my cholesterol had dropped down below 200. I was going to be able to avoid medication, as long as I could stay on track.

So back to the YMCA! I continue to make slow and permanent changes to my exercise and diet habits. But I easily get bored with exercise, so I needed to stay on track. The Cardio Cycling class really helped me do this. The class allows me to share my exercise time with new YMCA friends that have common fitness goals and interests. Sometimes we push each other to get that extra half mile or extra half turn of tension on a climb! You'll often hear "more hill" echoing from the spin room as we are cheering each other on. I have learned that it is possible for us to work hard at exercise and have fun at the same time. My YMCA friends also helped me expand my workout to include cardio and resistance training in the Wellness Center. A group of us even entered the indoor Triathlon and to our surprise took home metals! I am so thankful for my new YMCA friends and their positive impact on my fitness and health.

Fast forward to today. A couple more holes in my belt later, I am down 25 pounds and my cholesterol levels are normal. I am starting to get complements from people that I have not seen in a while, asking me what the secret is to my weight loss. In my mid-40's, I now have more energy and am in better shape than when I was 30. The best part is that I no longer have trouble finding the energy or desire to exercise. I still have a long way to go, needing to lose at least another 25 to 35 pounds. I don't know how long it will take to reach my fitness goals, but with my new found YMCA friends I know that I will get there and will have fun along the way.