

TRACIE BUTTERFIELD'S Y STORY

About 25 years ago, I was diagnosed with fibromyalgia most likely brought on by a congenital kidney problem which I had surgically repaired. My doctors told me the best thing to manage my pain was to keep moving and stretch a lot. I started walking with my friend Nancy and then when the YMCA opened up we joined so we could use the treadmill when the weather was bad.

For years I just used the YMCA as a "gym." We jumped on those treadmills at the front of the room and walked, ran and talked to each other and then we left. I had never even gone into the women's locker room until about three years ago!

When Nancy retired and moved to Arizona, I decided to join a couple other friends of mine on the stepper. Now the stepper gives you a much better vantage point. I could observe everyone that came upstairs and because it was such a major thoroughfare I met so many characters. Of course my friends, Marlo and Angie



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were established "steppers" so they introduced me to a few of the regulars. I met Steve who never missed an opportunity to come over and tell us his latest corny joke, and then there was Fred who was just so friendly and kind that when his grandson was diagnosed with bone cancer, we all cried together. And of course, my all-time favorite "Fancy Nancy" who must be close to 80 and still wearing her shirt that says something like, "I'm not just eye candy, I'm here to workout." She is awesome, and I would challenge anyone to keep up with her on the elliptical.

I was thoroughly enjoying my mornings at the Y socially but the chronic pain I suffered from still plagued me. All my research revealed that I could really benefit from some time in the pool, but when I looked down at the pool I saw a peer group 15-20 years older than myself doing a class and I was afraid that it would be isolating, that I would get bored. Boy was I wrong! Not only are there

varying ages in the pool, but they are chatty and older really does mean wiser! The decision to commit to the deep water exercising absolutely changed my life. Not only did my physical health improve beyond measure to the point where I don't live with chronic pain everyday anymore, but I had an emotional health breakthrough as well after meeting my friend Pam Brown. Pam is about the same age as my mother, and she's the most beautiful person I know. She is positive and uplifting and is my biggest cheerleader in life besides my husband! This woman has three masters degrees, is well traveled, has experience beyond her years in business and life and is dedicated to mentoring others. I can't tell you how many times over my Y membership has paid for itself, if I were to think of my time with Pam as paid counseling! She has helped me navigate the

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toughest obstacles from my childhood and because of her I am more emotionally aware and have been able to really grow in personal relationships and in business.

I am turning 52 years old this Christmas and I'm in the best place emotionally and physically than I think I have ever been in my life. Just so happy and I feel so blessed. And the amazing thing is that my

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There have been a few times I've found myself crying uncontrollably hanging on to the edge of the pool, and I have been a bit embarrassed knowing that the lifeguards are wondering if I need to be saved, but Pam always says that tears are for healing, so I am all for that! Pam's counsel and encouragement have meant just as much if not more to me than the physical transformation I have made. Knowing her has literally been life changing.

story isn't unique. The YMCA fosters these kinds of relationships and offers so much more than what I ever knew about in the beginning. At Sherwood we have the most incredible staff and when I walk through those doors, I feel welcomed and cared for. Who doesn't want that?

We want to hear from you! How has the Y impacted you or your family's life?

SUBMIT YOUR Y STORY

