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SUBMIT YOUR Y STORY

CURTIS DENT'S Y STORY

If you were to ask Curtis what the YMCA was before 2006, he would have responded with "is that the village people song?" Growing up in Kenai Alaska, Curtis never experienced the programs or community of the YMCA. Curtis's Y story did not begin learning to swim at the Y, or attending a child care program, or playing basketball, or staying at YMCA Camp Collins. "My Y story started in ignorance, but its so much bigger than just a Y story—it's a Christ story, an opportunity to come out of my shell, live my faith and be accepted in the business community ... to not be afraid."

Curtis' college career brought him to Oregon, where he stayed post graduation and began working. While in the business world of banking and insurance, Curtis met Mark Burris—our now COO. In 2013, Mark invited Curtis to the Christian Mission Advancement dinner at the Beaverton Hoop YMCA. "I had heard of the YMCA at this point, but I did not realize that the 'C' in the YMCA stood for 'Christian.' Attending the event was eye opening on the mission, but



"MY MOM TAUGHT ME NOT TO BE LAZY, SO I MAKE SURE MY PLAYERS AREN'T."

nothing further came of the event." It wasn't until three years later that Mark again invited Curtis the event again.

From his second attendance, Curtis felt more encouraged to become involved and get behind the cause of the YMCA. "I spoke with Mark on how I could get involved. He mentioned joining the Board of Trustees, with involvement on the Christian Mission Advancement Committee." Curtis left their conversation thinking about joining the Board, and began reaching out to friends, coworkers and strangers asking if they knew what the "C" in the YMCA stood for. "A lot of people did not know it stood for Christian—which made me feel better for originally not knowing—but I was surprised. About half the people I asked only knew. Many guessed it was community. After questioning people, I felt called to join this cause." Curtis joined the Board of Trustees and made his one condition be serving on the Christian Mission Advancement committee.

This new position gave Curtis something that he had searched for quite some time—a great conversation piece to share his beliefs with others in the business field. "This position gave me the opportunity to tell people, I am on the Board for the Young Men's Christian Association, and I serve on the Christian Mission Advancement Committee." Curtis noticed this was not only a fantastic conversation starter, but something that he could share without judgment in a business meeting.

In the beginning of his relationship with the Y, Curtis still did not realize how involved the YMCA was into the community. "I didn't know it was such a big deal. I went to a rec volleyball game in Gresham to support a friend's child, and I walk in and they were wearing a Y logo."

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"I SPEND CLOSE TO FIVE OR SIX HOURS HERE A DAY."



Curtis comments on how much bigger the Y is and how he wants to help make it known in the community. "I also feel gypped that I didn't join the Y when I was younger."

Curtis found himself attending the next Christian Mission Advancement dinner again, but this time as the emcee. It was within his first year of joining the Board of Trustees, he transitioned from joining the Christian Mission Advancement Committee to becoming the chair—replacing Mark, as he moved from the Board, to staff at the Y. "I was able to say a year ago, I was just like you, sitting there, trying to figure out what the YMCA is. Now I am here, on stage to help the cause."

Curtis is honored to get behind people like Bob Reichen—who is our VP of Mission Advancement—on their mission and give more support. "No sense in reinventing my own mission, but I find this a tremendous benefit to help our organization with my time, talents and sharing our cause." Curtis wants to work to preserve the "C" in the YMCA. "The heritage of the Y needs to stay in the cause."

This is something that Curtis notices when he attends Board meetings, as not every member of the Board is Christian, but everyone is behind the cause of the Y. These meetings are very Christ centered, as they start with prayer or a reading but it is still respected regardless of their beliefs. "People can get behind the bigger cause because they know it is ultimately good."

There is one thing however, that Curtis can't seem to figure out since his involvement at the Y. "Which way does the 'C' go? I asked the people at the highest level of this organization and they don't even know." If you know the answer, or if you need to listen to the Village People song to find out, let Curtis know the next time you see him.

Thank you Curtis for helping uphold the Christian mission in our Y and for the work you do along side our Christian Mission Advancement Committee. We are grateful for your passion and commitment to our cause.

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

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