

Sam Toft's Y Story

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Most days of the year, you'll find Sam Toft hanging out with teens at the Everett Y. Once summer rolls around, he takes on an additional role as the Assistant Camp Director at Camp Snohomish, the Y's overnight camp. As a veteran summer camp staff member, Toft likes the opportunity to help influence and guide wherever he can – both campers and counselors alike.

"The amount of growth that occurs within a child during one week away from home is unparalleled," said Toft. "We are very intentional about what we do and why we do it and want every kid to come in and know it's okay to be who you are. Camp is the ultimate human builder."

The Y's goal is for all kids who want to experience camp have the opportunity, regardless of their family's financial situation. In 2023, nearly \$34,000 of scholarship dollars were distributed to families, allowing many kids to attend camp for the first time.

"I remember an 8th grader who was on a scholarship take full advantage of the opportunity. It was a huge achievement just getting him to camp," said Toft. "Day one he was barely dipping his toes in and by the day four he had embraced everything about camp – the great moments, growth opportunities, and relationship building."

Toft and his fellow counselors work hard each week to ensure a safe space, while creating a fun, positive environment for all ages and abilities. The Y sets the bar high and everything that happens at camp is designed for exploration and growth.

"Every kid needs to feel empowered to feel comfortable in their own skin, said Toft. "Camp does that better than anything else."