

Sue's Y Story

A few months ago, Sue told her daughter that she is happier than she's been in years. Much of that joy, she says, started the day she joined the Y.

At 75, Sue built a life rooted in family and hard work. She went to college, moved to Snohomish County from Texas, raised her children, and now treasures the time she spends with her grandchildren. After retirement, life slowed down, and Sue fought through health-related battles that changed everything.

What she thought was heartburn turned out to be blocked arteries. Two stents later, Sue found herself home from the hospital, feeling stuck.

"I had a pity party," she says. "I laid in bed feeling sorry for myself."

Eventually, Sue realized something had to change. She needed to get moving again. That's what led her to the Everett Y.

At first, walking into a room full of strangers wasn't easy. "I'm very shy when I first meet people," Sue admits. But she sat down in a group exercise class and met a woman who would become a dear friend. Two and a half years later, her strength and confidence have returned.

"It's been a lifesaver," Sue says. "I can't imagine the Y not being in my life."

She's become a regular and attends classes three days a week. She moves at her own pace. Some days she rests, but you'll still find her at the Y. Through Coffee & Connections, potlucks, and group exercise classes, Sue found a sense of community.

When an opportunity presented itself for Sue to become a volunteer, she jumped right in. Now she volunteers at senior events, welcomes new members, and encourages others to get involved.

This year, she started campaigning and set a goal of \$1,000 for the Community Campaign. When raising funds through a Valentine's shop at the branch, she nearly reached her goal and decided to double it. Once Sue believes in something, she goes all in.

Sue believes the Y is more than a gym. It is mental health. It is belonging. It is purpose. It is a place where seniors are seen. A place where children learn to swim, teens find mentors, and older adults rediscover strength. A place where you give and receive at the same time.

“As a volunteer, I try to give back to the YMCA as a way of saying thank you for the joy, strength, and community it has given me,” Sue reflects.

To learn more about volunteer opportunities at the Y, visit ymca-snoco.org/volunteer.