

## Amber's Y Story

When Amber and her family moved from Arizona to Washington, it was a big adjustment. After living her entire life in the sun, the gray winter skies were more than a weather shift. Amber is a stay-at-home mom with two daughters. Her oldest lives with cystic fibrosis.

"When you're a mom, but you also have a child that's medically complex, there's not a lot of break from that," Amber shares. "It's hard to find something where you can step away and not be constantly thinking about it."

In June, her family joined the YMCA of Snohomish County. They came for the pool, but they found so much more.

Swimming is critical for her daughter's lung health, and access to an indoor pool made the Y a practical choice. Open swim became part of their routine. But while the pool supports her daughter's physical health, the Y has transformed Amber's.

"The Y is my happy place," she says. "It's where stress melts away even if only for a little while."

For the first time in years, Amber carved out something just for herself. Through group exercise classes and strength training, she's grown stronger than she ever imagined possible in her 40s. Chronic back pain has improved. Her endurance has increased. More importantly, her joy has returned.

"I'm probably happier than I've ever been in my adult life," she says.

At the Y, Amber found instructors who know her by name. Friends who encourage her through hard workouts. What started as solo workouts evolved into group exercise, where camaraderie and accountability made all the difference.

Her entire family has found their routine. Her husband makes time to come in after work, while their daughters have found a place of their own, from playing in the Kids Zone to youth soccer and indoor sports.

"It's really added to our family," Amber says. "A lot of the people we know, now we see them here."

For a stay-at-home mom, reliable child care is everything. The Kids Zone gave Amber the freedom to attend classes knowing her daughters were safe, cared for, and just down the hall.

The Y didn't just improve her health. It helped her through a hard transition. It eased isolation and built connection.