

Diane's Y Story

Diane has been part of the YMCA story for nearly her entire life.

Raised in North Everett, Diane first came to the Y as a child in the early 1960s to take swim lessons. A few years later, she joined the swim team. What began at the pool would become a lifelong connection, one that would stretch across generations of her family.

When Diane was a young mother, she returned to the Y looking for a place to exercise.

"We were young and poor," she remembers. "The Y offered free membership and child care if I became an instructor. I thought, 'Wow, cool.'"

She trained as a fitness instructor during the high-energy aerobics era, teaching classes in downtown Everett while raising her children. The Y was more than a gym. It was child care, community, friendship, and support during a busy season of life.

"I went on YMCA field trips with my son. We'd spend hours at swim practice, and afterward all the kids would get donuts together," Diane said. "There are a lot of happy memories there."

Over the years, the Y became a gathering place for her entire family. Her father attended her fitness classes, proudly calling himself "the funny old guy in the back." Today, her son and his two daughters are Y members, learning to swim just as Diane once did.

"The Y has always been a part of me," she said.

Now, Diane enjoys water fitness classes and recently tried chair yoga, appreciating the welcoming environment and encouragement to participate at your own pace.

"People worry about what others think," she said. "Just go at your own pace and have fun. You walk in feeling like everyone's looking at you, but they're really not."

For Diane, the Y has always been what it promises to be: a place where people belong.

"The Y is a great family place. It truly is," she said. "If you wonder where to go, it's always here."