

Sue's Y Story: Finding Her Community

When Sue walked through the doors of the Everett Family YMCA at the start of 2025, she was carrying more than a gym bag.

She was newly retired, managing chronic joint pain, and recovering from a serious medical setback. A year earlier, sepsis had developed around titanium in her foot, which was devastating news for a marathon runner. When she joined the Y, Sue still had a PICC line in her arm, both feet had already been fused multiple times due to arthritis, and more surgeries were ahead.

Still, every weekday at 5 AM, Sue showed up.

What she found waiting for her was a group of people just as determined to overcome adversity as she was. The early-morning cycling crew became a constant, familiar faces, steady encouragement, and accountability that went beyond fitness. In class, Sue often sits behind a row of members in their 70s who are, as she puts it, “knocking it out of the park.” Watching them inspires her to keep going. “I get to suit up and show up,” she says.

In the months that followed, Sue endured more than her share of challenges. The titanium was fully removed from her foot. Just before surgery, while working on her motorcycle, she suffered a severe injury, tearing tendons in her elbow, shoulder, and bicep. Multiple surgeries followed with grueling rehab.

Through it all, the YMCA remained a lifeline, not just physically, but mentally and emotionally. Cycling classes gave Sue structure, motivation, and perspective. Instructors rode alongside members and staff greeted her by name.

Despite everything, Sue continued to push forward. Last year alone, she ran 41 half marathons and one full marathon (the Seattle Marathon). For any runner, that's an incredible achievement. But Sue is quick to say her greatest accomplishment wasn't measured in miles. It was opening herself up.

“I've never been the social person at the gym,” she says. “Finding my people, that's been the biggest growth of all.”