

YMCA Impact Stories

The following Y stories can be shared with YMCA members – in your own words – to let members know the impact receiving a Y scholarship can have for an individual, family or senior. These stories are also meant to be an inspiration to share your own stories of impact with Y members at your branch during the Community Campaign.

THE YMCA SAVED SAM'S LIFE

As a young boy living on the west side of Cleveland, Sam's family did not have money for extracurricular activities. This was not something that Sam thought much about during his early years in school. He happily spent his free time with his classmates playing outdoors.

Around the age of 12, when his school friends began to make poor choices, Sam's thoughts began to turn to finding a place where he could spend his afternoons and Saturdays. He talked with his family about finding a space where he could belong and make new friends, somewhere that felt safe and supportive.

Sam decided he wanted to go to the YMCA. He was happy to learn that he would be able to join the Y with the help of a scholarship. The Y invited him into a community that was welcoming and offered him healthy choices for fun, friendship, and mentorship. It was at the Y where Sam discovered a better path. He found a second home where he could play sports, receive support with schoolwork, and assistance from adults who were kind and thriving in their own lives. This led to new opportunities.

As a teenager he became a camp counselor. Serving others and having the chance to share what the Y had taught him helped to bolster Sam's confidence even more. The Y gave Sam a sense of what he could achieve, what he could be, and how to get there. He set goals to continue his education after high school and applied for and received college scholarships.

Now an adult with a career as an educator and a family who visits the Y each week, Sam has built a happy and healthy life that he loves. Strengthening and helping the community is the Y's cause. Everyone is welcome at the YMCA. Your generosity opens doors in your community. Just as it did for Sam.

THE YMCA HELPS FAMILIES THRIVE

Amanda is a mom, student, and the sole provider for her family. She is also a grateful recipient of scholarship from the YMCA that has opened the door to safe, affordable child

care for her son. Preschool at the YMCA is a special place for her son to learn, have fun, and make friends while Amanda is in class studying to become a nurse.

With the Y as her family's partner, Amanda can provide both for her son's basic needs and for his care during the day. She does not have to choose between the two. Her son is happy, safe, and has everything he needs to grow and develop.

Being able to go to school, so that she can soon provide for her family entirely on her own, is something that the Y is allowing Amanda to do. She is looking forward to the day when she can give back to the Y, so that another single mom can do as she is, build a career while caring for family. Her gratitude to her Y community is overwhelming.

Amanda is thankful to everyone who lives the Y's mission ... to welcome all. She would like everyone to know that the YMCA is changing lives, one individual and family at a time!

THE YMCA IS HERE DURING CHANGE

Sometimes an event happens in a family's journey that is not planned. When Daniel's family had a recent financial setback due to taking on the responsibility of caring for an aging parent, they thought they would need to end their Y membership.

What they learned when they went to the Y to say goodbye to the staff who had become their friends over the years was that they did not need to pause those relationships. There was assistance available to them in the form of scholarship. Daniel's family learned that the Y is a place of belonging for all. Neighbors helping neighbors in each Y community.

Everyone who supports the YMCA's Annual Campaign by giving a gift to the Y is helping families and individuals in a time of need. Because of this shared generosity, Daniel's family would be able to continue to prioritize their health and participation in sports and wellness activities, which were needed more than ever with their added responsibility of caring for grandma.

Time at the Y was also extended to grandma who was able to make new friends and become more mobile through movement classes and activities for older adults. The benefits of this scholarship have led to better health for grandma and Daniel's entire family which is resulting in planning a path to regaining their financial footing.

Daniel and his family are looking forward to giving back to the Y, grateful for the time that they have benefited from scholarship, knowing that their gift will allow others to remain at the Y during a time of need.