

BEING EXTRAORDINARY AT THE Y ... TOGETHER WE'RE MAKING AN IMPACT

Johanna, The Hillcrest Family YMCA is her home away from home

In her own words, a long-time Y member shared the meaning behind her gift of financial assistance:

The theme song to the popular 1980s TV sitcom, "Cheers," boasts "... where everybody knows your name, and they're always glad you came." This is exactly how I feel about the Hillcrest Family YMCA, where I have been a member on and off for over 23 years.

I first became a member as a young mother, bringing my children and remembering how wonderful the child watch staff were. There's one remarkable difference at the Y and that is the way that you are treated. I was a member when I had cancer and Y staff would go out of their way to take care of me on the days when I was not feeling well. I was a member when I went through my divorce and remember receiving loving support from the staff because they knew me by name.

Now, as I navigate health issues and am not able to work full-time and thus cannot afford my Y membership, Trish, at Hillcrest, in her warm and ever-present compassionate manner, said "No problem, Jo, we've got you." I've had the benefit of two months of scholarship from the Y and am so grateful for this kindness. In an often-difficult world, I feel blessed to know there's a safe and welcoming place – where people know my name ... and truly care about me.

Let Me Tell You About Johanna

- **She is thankful for financial support to allow her to keep her Y membership during an illness**
- **Y staff have supported Johanna through her major life challenges**
- **She feels truly cared about at the Y!**

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Michael, Splashing safely with the grateful help of financial assistance

Michael's great aunt Denise shared how the gift of swim lessons brightens her great nephew's life:

Denise wanted to find a place where her great nephew Michael, who she has guardianship of, could be active and engaged. He tried running, but with asthma it was difficult. When they thought about swimming Denise was not sure she could afford lessons as she is on a fixed income. She checked in at the Hillcrest Family YMCA and the staff said they could offer financial assistance.

"The Y really works for us," said Denise. Michael loves his swim teacher and counting to five while he has his face in the water. "He has autism and ADHD, and his teacher is great with him," said Denise. "She is so patient and listens as he talks away during his time in the pool."

Prior to coming to the Y Denise didn't know what she was going to do to offer Michael a positive activity and now they have a place to go where they know Michael when he walks in the door.

Let Me Tell You About Denise and Michael

- **Denise plans to learn to swim too so that she and Michael can enjoy the water together!**
- **She is extremely grateful for the financial assistance the Y provides**
- **Denise is teaching Michael to be grateful for the opportunity they both have to learn to swim**

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Rose Scotland, 99 years young and teaching at the Hillcrest Family YMCA

Rose just celebrated her 99th birthday at the YMCA by sharing her story of teaching at the Y. "I've enjoyed every student," said Rose. "I take the time to get to know everyone. We tell jokes and have a good time."

Rose has a long history at the Y. Before the Hillcrest Family YMCA was constructed, she went to the downtown Y to learn how to swim. As Rose described, "I almost drowned in Lake Erie when I was 17. That's what prompted me to learn how to swim. I had to learn how to save myself."

Now Rose is celebrating 19 years of teaching aquatics at the Y and looking forward to her 20th year of teaching during her 100th year of life!

Let Me Tell You About Rose

- **Rose was a real-life Rosie the Riveter during WWII**
- **She brought her daughter to the Y at 5 years old for swim lessons**
- **Rose's energy and love of life and the YMCA are infectious!**

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Kenny McGuire, Building relationships for over 26 years at the Y

“The thing I love about the YMCA is that we build relationships, said Kenny when asked to describe his years of service in aquatics at the YMCA. “When swim lessons are over, we talk and build fellowship.”

Kenny works at the Parker Hannafin Downtown YMCA. He is the evening person. You will find him at the pool working as a lifeguard or leading a full pool of people through water aerobics twice a week.

Something that is especially fun for Kenny is enjoying a cookout with his Y friends!

Let me Tell you About Kenny

- **Kenny met his wife at the Y**
- **He welcomes 20 to 23 people into his water aerobics class each session**
- **His favorite part of being at the Y is how we build relationships**

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Kay Cilimburg, Living a Y life at West Shore Family YMCA

“The YMCA has been my home away from home for aquatics,” said Kay. “As a physical education teacher, I wanted to help others enjoy and be safe in water.” Kay has shared her love of water with active older adults and has especially enjoyed helping folks who are new to the water.

She prefers the welcoming feeling of the West Shore Family YMCA and, along with her husband Bob, has consistently provided meaningful philanthropic contributions to support her belief in the mission of the YMCA.

Let me Tell you About Kay

- **As a child, Kay participated in events and programs at the YMCA near Niagara Falls**
- **Kay’s three daughters learned to swim at the West Shore Family YMCA**
- **After retiring from teaching Kay became a swim instructor at the West Shore Y**
- **Kay and her husband make a significant impact on the Y through their annual gift**

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Gina DeSantis, Connecting with community at the Lakewood Y

Gina enjoys meeting new Y members at the Lakewood branch. The Y is a great place to connect! As a volunteer member of the Lakewood YMCA advisory board, Gina helps increase support for the Y as the annual campaign chairperson. She talks with donors to find out more about why they give to the Y and encourages everyone to get involved in their community. "Even if you can only give a small amount of time or financial resources, it all adds up," said Gina.

Let me Tell you About Gina

- **Gina joined the YMCA when she moved to Lakewood 20 years ago**
- **Gina loves engaging with Y members**
- **Gina believes deeply in the Y's mission to be available for all**
- **She is the founder of Gina DeSantis Ceramics and works out of an old automobile factory**

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George Zehnder, Honing his athletic skills at the Geauga Family YMCA

With the help of the staff at the Geauga Family YMCA, George trained to compete and win at this summer's Pan-American Masters Games which were held in Cleveland in July.

George's time spent training at the Y helped him find success as he competed in this multisport international festival for athletes 30 and over. At 74, George took first place in his age category in the triathlon! He is so thankful to have had the Y as a partner. "They did a lot of encouraging," said George. "I thank them for that."

Let me Tell you about George

- **George is a 12-year member of the Geauga Family YMCA**
- **He credits the Y in assisting him to achieve his fitness goal**
- **His accomplishments are encouraging others at the Y to try too**
- **George is grateful for the people, equipment, and coaching that the Y provides**