



# Partners With Youth A YMCA Story



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## WHO I AM

My name is Mary Butcher and I’m glad to tell the story of how my husband Dave and our five children Saxon, Margo, Titus, Cassius, and Charmaine have benefited because our involvement at the Y. As a family we have been members of the YMCA for the past 7 years.

## MY SITUATION

We moved to Auburn seven years ago from another local community which did not have any sort of community center with swimming facilities. With our children ranging in age from 4 to 11 we needed to find a safe family atmosphere for them to learn to swim in. So much recreation in this area revolves around being at the water and there’s no piece of mind when your children can’t swim.

## ADD THE YMCA

The cost of swim lessons for all our kids was too high at the local county pools, but the YMCA was willing to provide us with partial scholarships which allowed our children to take lessons for long enough to become proficient swimmers. As part of their learning experience, Dave and I were encouraged to come to family swim times and swim along with our kids. That was the beginning of our “family times” at the Y. While our kids were taking lessons at the old Y on 12<sup>th</sup> Street, we would walk past a large window looking into the work out area every time we took them to their lessons. Eventually the guilt pangs of needing to workout overcame us and we began going into the gym area while the kids were swimming. For me this was a good opportunity to get some needed stress relief after chasing around five children all day, and a chance to improve my strength and coordination which was depleted from a stroke a few years before. As soon as each of our children turned twelve they went through the training needed to be able to join us in the weight room. Now “family times” came to include times when the Butcher family accounted for half of anyone present in the weight room.

## THE RESULT

Over the years the YMCA has been a central feature of our “family time”. They have provided opportunities for us to strengthen our family ties by allowing and encouraging us to workout together and to have fun together. Our two daughters have attended every father daughter dance with their dad (even when the oldest was 18), our children have competed on the swim team and basketball teams, and two of our family members have worked at the Y as life guards. Our relationship with the YMCA began with our kids learning to swim and now one of our children is an excellent swim instructor herself. More than all these other things the Y has done, they have been provided a place where we are cared for and we can care for others. The staff and members we have come to know over the past seven years are caring, generous people. They have made us feel like we are an important part of their lives, just like a family.

***PLEASE SUPPORT PARTNERS WITH YOUTH***