

BODY
MIND
SPIRIT



Auburn Valley YMCA Success Story : **By Tarie Sloan**



All of my life I have struggled with trying to find happiness and trying to fill a void with all the wrong things. At 34 years old I looked in the mirror and found a stranger staring back at me. The woman in the mirror **found comfort and love in food and it showed**. The whole 275 lbs were compacted into a short and limited 5 foot 4 inch body. That year my life started to change.

I was having severe stomach pains caused by polyps. Through a colonoscopy they successfully found, removed, and biopsied the polyps to discover they were cancerous. I learned that obese people are more likely to get that type of cancer and have it return again. The fear of losing my life or even the ability to raise my two daughters pushed me to make some dramatic changes in my life. **I had not exercised in years** and knew very little about it. Through the Auburn Valley YMCA's Biggest Winner Series **I lost 50lbs!** I was so excited, but was saddened when the program ended and I returned to finding happiness within food.

Knowing that I did not want to allow food to control my every action or emotion, I sat pondering, asking God, **"Why me?"** Then I read a pamphlet in the YMCA lobby about a program called Journey to Freedom. Everything in the pamphlet seemed to describe me. Reluctantly I signed up for this program which required me to become honest with myself and try and discover my reasons for seeking happiness in my addiction. This program is all about change and **not being afraid to take two steps forward and one back**. I have learned to love myself and treat myself with respect. I am now a recovering food addict!

I am currently at 220lbs and still have a way to go to get to my goal weight but I now know that **I can accomplish anything I want to** with the help and support of all of my friends and family at the YMCA. I will be doing my second half-marathon in October. My next big adventure with the YMCA is going to be becoming a volunteer spinning instructor.

The Auburn Valley YMCA has **changed my life forever**. From the staff that greets you at the front counter, to the fitness instructor that makes you feel comfortable and capable of trying new things, to the awesome staff that take care of my daughter in child watch (My 3 year old knows them all by name and can't wait to embrace each and every one of them every morning with a great big hug). I consider the Auburn Valley YMCA and everyone that belongs to it as my **great big extended family**. Thank you YMCA for giving me the ability to believe in myself and the knowledge to help me understand what I want in life and how I can attain it.

Do you have a story you'd like to share? Inspire others to stay motivated or to get started on their own journey toward better well-being. Contact : Katie Koblenz at kkoblenz@seattleyymca.org to share your Y story.

Auburn Valley YMCA
auburnvalleyymca.org
253.833.2770

We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities.