

30 Years of Community!

Connie first joined the old Grantham YMCA in 1991, looking for a place to exercise. She remembers the old lobby and the facility, and little did she realize at the time that this connection to the YMCA would continue over the next three decades!

Connie has been a YMCA member transitioning from that old location to the Walker Family YMCA, and eventually to the Niagara West location when her family took up residence in Grimsby. Living only 1.2 km away, Connie says she has no excuses for not taking full advantage of the opportunity to participate and stay fit. She likes booking her workouts in advance because she sees these as appointments she must keep; a way to be accountable and make sure nothing gets in the way of her workout. She knows the YMCA has had a hard time in some communities with new competitors and the challenges of the pandemic. However, she feels her community is very lucky to have a local YMCA all to themselves, with a great pool and fantastic, friendly staff. She hopes everyone appreciates this and takes full advantage of this asset.



Early in 2020, Connie and her girlfriend decided that they needed to get more serious about their attendance and hold each other accountable. They made a pact to attend group fitness classes together at least twice a week. They were regularly attending Saturday mornings when COVID-19 hit forcing the closure of her home branch. It felt like a big loss to not have her local Y available to her in the short term, but as soon as the Y launched Outdoor Fitness classes later in the year, Connie returned. She was very happy to be able to socialize with others outdoors. It was a welcome social connection during times of isolation, and she was amazed by the range of participants who came back to the Y.

Connie also took part in all the Online Virtual Classes from her basement and while that transition felt awkward at first (feeling a little intimidated by being on screen), she soon realized no one was looking at anyone else and everyone was there for the same reason—to stay connected, active, and healthy—and that really motivated her to continue attending.

Now that her Niagara West YMCA is back up and running, you will find Connie at the YMCA most days of the week. She likes to swim, and she takes a variety of classes and makes sure to include Yoga regularly into her routine to keep her injuries in check.

Connie says the YMCA community is amazing. She is motivated by the diversity of people who participate in programs and services, and she is especially inspired by the many older adults that she has met; people who have consistently maintained a lifetime of physical activity and continue to be mobile and engaged. She hopes this will be true for her as well.

Recently, Connie asked the Aquatics staff to teach her how to do a speed turn in the pool to improve her length swimming, something she had never learned. After some personal coaching and practice, Connie successfully completed her first turn. The cheering of the lifeguards on deck caught the attention of a neighbouring lane swimmer who told her that, at the age of 70, he had learned to swim at the YMCA just the year before and that he now swims 50 laps every day.

These are the people, connections and experiences that have kept Connie at the YMCA for 30 years. Every day she meets someone new, or hears a story, or makes a new friend. She values that everyone is welcome at her Y and that there are no judgments about people, their ability, or their motivation. Everyone is doing their best to be healthier; from those who are learning something for the first time, to those preparing for a competition, and people like her just trying to stay healthy and active. There really is something for everyone, and she finds the power of these connections to be her motivation.

We are delighted Connie is achieving her personal goals and we look forward to another 30 years!

