

Faces of the YMCA

“The YMCA changed our lives” ... Farquhar Family

Chantal Farquhar joined the YMCA at eight years of age in London, Ontario, where she attended summer camp. She spent many Saturdays at the YMCA participating in programs and swimming lessons.

Chantal is now a member of the YMCA of Niagara. Her husband Craig and her two young daughters, Madeleine and Riley, are also members. Chantal returned to membership at the YMCA specifically to lose weight and get in shape after her second child was born. Her husband Craig says, “Being at the Y has given Chantal a new outlook on a complete her and she has really changed her life. It has come full circle. Her activity has now gotten me involved in the Y.” Craig believes that “being physically active during the day allows me to be more on the ball with my children in the evening; it makes me better at my job, more in tune.”

Chantal says being a member of the Y “has made us all happier. Craig and I feel fitter and healthier and we are setting a good example for the kids. They are more independent. The Y is a safe place where the children can grow and learn and they feel as if they belong somewhere.” It is important to be in a trusting environment such as the YMCA offers, where staff embodies the values she feels are important, she says.

Chantal says, “One of my favourite things about the Y is that my kids feel like they belong here. People know them, acknowledge them. They clearly have their own thing going on here and I think that’s wonderful. Children’s programs at the Y are driven by good staff who communicate well, provide educational programs and always have the children’s best interests in mind. I’m impressed with the activities they plan and how well organized they are.” The children participate in swimming lessons, various programs and camp.

Belonging to the YMCA and being involved with a group is instrumental to Chantal’s personal success, she believes. Chantal has had a lot of personal success in the past two years. She started to run two years ago and has progressed from one kilometre to 5 to 7 kilometres at a time. Because of her love of running and her ability, she was encouraged by a staff member to join the Triathlon Club, and now she participates in 10 km races.

Chantal says the YMCA is “much more than a place to work out, and something the whole family enjoys and has been a great way to make friends. The Y makes things happen, helps you achieve goals and there are always people around you who support and encourage you. I feel connected to the YMCA and I believe the Y has changed my life.”