

Faces of the YMCA

“My Y for life”

Kristy McKitrick

Kristy has been involved with the YMCA since she was a child, first in Barrie and then in Niagara. It has been a long and rewarding association, she says, and has allowed her not just to participate in many programs but also to serve in several capacities, as a volunteer, donor and board member.

Kristy's first experience with the YMCA began with swimming lessons as a child and with the encouragement of her instructors she went on to become a member of her university swim team. To this day Kristy still has a passion for swimming. Kristy met her husband Steve at the YMCA while playing volleyball.

In 1994 Steve and Kristy moved to the Niagara Region where they became members of the Walker Family YMCA.

It didn't take Kristy long to get involved with the YMCA. When approached by Bill Galloway, Board member, to get involved in the YMCA's Capital Campaign Kristy was eager and ready to help her community in any way she could. In 2000 Kristy became a member of the YMCA's Board of Directors and soon came to realize the extent of the YMCA's outreach into the community. She was very impressed, she says, and decided to become more involved.

Kristy became the chairperson of the YMCA's Strong Kids Annual Support Campaign; and believing wholeheartedly in the YMCA's mission, vision and values, she became interested in governance. Kristy was then asked to become a board member of the YMCA Canada National Board. Looking back on those three years, Kristy says it was awesome to see what the

YMCA does nationally and globally. Niagara is one of the top YMCA's in Canada and our CEO, Steve Butz, is very well respected in the Canadian system.

The YMCA has given her the opportunity as a volunteer to fulfill her desire to help out in the community and to grow as an individual. Kristy says, "I have learned how successful a nonprofit organization can be, what great leadership looks like, and how the Y can impact so many people in our community. I love the opportunities it gives people. People have meaningful employment when they work at the Y, they are happy in their work. And there are a lot of people with long-time tenure."

Kristy says the YMCA has had an enormous impact on her. Major turns in her life have all had something to do with the Y, including her early swimming lessons, meeting her husband, sitting on the YMCA of Niagara Board of Directors and national Board. "The experiences I have had at the Y contributed to my personal growth and learning and have been an empowering experience," she says. "Being given the opportunity to volunteer in the capacities I have is a gift."