

YMCA Faces of the YMCA

“People at the YMCA helped raise me....”

Tammy Spurrell

Tammy first became involved with the YMCA through the Kids First and Kaleidoscope Programs. That was eight years ago when she was nine years of age.

The YMCA’s Kids First program is designed for children aged four to 13, with special needs or needing special considerations. It allows young people to develop social skills and build relationships with their peers, while participating in recreational activities geared to their abilities.

As Tammy got older, she progressed into the Kaleidoscope Program; another program specifically designed for young people aged 13 to 25, with special needs or considerations. While attending the Kaleidoscope program Tammy enjoys helping her friends in Kids First. She helps feed participants, often helps in the pool and likes to push her friend in her wheelchair around the track.

The main focus of this program is on developing life skills and recreational experiences. The program gives young people opportunities and support for involvement in fun and age appropriate activities. They have the chance to develop friendships while being integrated into a community setting. Tammy speaks fondly of the friends she has met at the YMCA.

Tammy likes to volunteer and says she does it “because it’s good for me, it makes me feel good”. Tammy also likes to work out when she is at the YMCA and spends her time doing weights and riding the bike. Tammy enjoys participating in the Leader Corps program with other members. Tammy will tell you that when planning and leading others she learned that “if you plan a game and it doesn’t work out, you always have to have a back up.”

Being involved in the YMCA has helped Tammy in many respects. In particular it has taught her to speak up for herself and her rights. One of Tammy’s favourite things about coming to the YMCA is the staff. She likes all of the staff, and especially Lucy, who she describes as fun and says “Lucy helped raise me.”