

## TAKING CONTROL WITH THE YMCA'S DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM

Christina McMullen learned she was at high risk for developing type 2 diabetes from her physician after her third pregnancy. "I had gestational diabetes and my doctor told me I would develop diabetes within 5-10 years if I didn't change something. I was only 29. Both my parents have diabetes and my brother got it when



he was 32." That was 14 years ago and Christina has been working hard to prevent diabetes, but says, "It's (diabetes) always in the back of my mind. I know what I need to do, but it's hard to put yourself first." When Christina heard about the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program, she was excited and thought it would be the extra help she needed because she felt "stuck and needed structure".

When asked about her experience in the program, Christina says, "Just being accountable and writing down what you are eating is huge. That first week when you're just writing down the foods, not even worrying about the details, is really enlightening. The most powerful thing I learned was how to eat well.

The group experience was really helpful because one person may be struggling with something and the group would bounce around ideas and a fresh perspective can really help. We encouraged each other. To see that it is such a struggle for other people too was unexpected. You always think it's just you struggling, but everyone in the group had different challenges and we collaborated and supported each other."

Christina also felt the program impacted her family and said, "The kids have been more conscious of how they are eating because they see the way I am eating now. It's different, before the program I was eating just salads and now I am eating more balanced meals and making healthier choices and it's better for all of us. I wish someone taught me that when I was young."

Christina says she is most proud of her general improved wellness, "I feel really good now, but I know I am not done. I learned it's not a weight loss program, it's about how to live a healthier lifestyle."

[Learn more about the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program.](#)



Tom Saunders learned he was at high risk for developing type 2 diabetes from his doctor. "My A1C numbers were creeping up in the wrong direction and my doctor even told me I was a 'diabetic in training'. Weight has been an issue for me and my doctor has been trying to get me to lose weight for a while now." When Tom learned of his risk status he knew he had to do something and told himself to start losing weight, but as many people can relate, "It's a lot easier to say it than to do it."



Tom learned about the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program at his Rotary Club meeting when Tanya Stack, the Rye YMCA's Program Coordinator, gave a presentation about the program. Immediately Tom thought, "It sounded like a good fit for me and I signed up within a week."

When asked about his expectations, Tom said, "I came into it with an open mind and my goal was to meet the program objectives which were pretty clear from the start. I met the program goal for weight loss and am working on the rest of it now, hoping to get the exercise component in there too. I was never a jock, I never wanted to work out, it (physical activity) was always something I had to do. Now, I am really trying to change my approach to activity, I'm working with a trainer at the Y twice a week and trying to go to Aquajog."

Tom commends the Y staff involved in the program and says, "Tanya and Scott did an excellent job conducting the sessions. They organized a very mutually supportive, empathetic group, and the group aspect was something I really enjoyed. Tom also notes the impact the program has had on his family, "My wife has been very supportive, she's following the nutrition piece as well and has lost 14 lbs. I've gotten a lot of positive feedback from friends and associates and that always feels good. I feel better overall, and I'm able to do more things since I'm not carrying as much weight, which has been great."

Tom says the most important thing he learned through his experience in the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program is that, "It is possible to make a turnaround, to change the way I eat, to actually change my eating habits. I've made changes both in terms of quantity and what I am choosing to put in my mouth."

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