

why the Y

Dear friend of the Athens YMCA,

Since I was 19 coaching basketball at the Y, I knew there was something magical about this place. Now as the CEO of the Athens YMCA, I can tell you my affection has only grown! Admittedly I am a bit biased, so **this summer I want to show you why *this* Y has my heart.**

More than anything we do, it's the people we serve that can best convey what makes this Y so special. **I believe Becky's story will show you what I mean:**

"Somehow I am in my 60s in a low impact seniors' class. I am deaf in one ear and after 3 surgeries have a dysfunctional knee and osteoarthritis. I had always been an athlete: a cheerleader, swimmer, softball player. So my identity says 'I don't fit here'... but my body says 'You are where you need to be.'

One class, I looked around the room and I saw a sea of women like me trying to keep up and find hope for new strength. We all were looking forward, eyes on Elyse, our instructor, ever cheerful, boundless energy, loving us, pulling fresh faith and strength out of us. 'You can do it! Come on!'

I felt a wave of gratitude for this gift of Elyse's from God. It dawned on me that God had planned, even before she was born, the good works she would do. In all of her years, God was preparing her to be a healer for me and these ladies and men around me.

I was overwhelmed by God's kindness to love me, encourage me, and bring hope for physical healing and longevity through these faithful instructors and the Athens YMCA."

So, why the Y?

Because the Y is a place where seniors are given refreshed hope and strength and where instructors are loving healers!

Gratefully,

Shae Wilson

CEO