

STORY 1: MARY - African-American, Age 65

Disability Inclusion / Health & Wellness / Sense of Community

MARY:

My name is Mary. Thirty years ago, I was changing a flat tire on the side of the road when I got hit by a car. I was in a coma for eight days and when I woke up, my right leg was gone. It was months before I was active again and I'm here to tell you that the YMCA was a huge part of how I got my life back.

There were trainers who helped me get strong. They got me into the pool. And that changed me! You see, in the water, someone like me can move in ways that just aren't possible other places. When I'm in the pool, it's like a little bit of freedom. I also started doing Pilates at the Y from my wheelchair. Took me two years, but now I can do it on the floor like everyone else.

But I think the greatest gift is my circle of friends from the Y. From the very beginning, people treated me like I belonged. When my husband Louis got sick a few years ago and passed away, I was in a bad way, but my Y PEOPLE... they were there for me.

Every time I walk through the door, I feel blessed to be part of the Y. I go there to be healthy. To feel full of life. To feel good about myself. And nobody treats me like I have a disability. Ever. And this might sound like an exaggeration but It's the truth. The Y helped save my life.