



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

ENCOURAGING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Tiffany's Diabetes Prevention Program Story EAU CLAIRE YMCA

My experience with the YMCA Diabetes Prevention class was life changing. I lost 55 pounds using the tools I learned in class to achieve the 21% weight loss.

I "knew" what I needed to do before the class started. I heard it everywhere: "Eat less, and exercise more." As a busy mom, I just didn't put myself on my own priority list. It's still a struggle, but my mindset has been changed, and I am determined to keep moving forward and making progress.

Like most of my classmates, exercise was not a priority (if it was, we probably wouldn't have qualified for the class!). I thought that exercise was me "killing myself" for 60 minutes three times a week, which usually resulted in needing days to recover, and eliminating any chance of getting a routine or momentum going. What I gained from that class is that I no longer think about exercise. I call it **activity**. I'm not "killing myself" ever again. I walk, bike and swim, but I also tap dance, garden and do other activities that I never considered as "exercise" before. The activity adds up, and everything counts.

I know that it adds up, because I learned to track my activity through this class. I use the My Fitness Pal tracker, and it has been an eye opener. Tracking is the most important thing I am taking away from this class. Tracking food choices and activity minutes has changed my mind and body. I make choices differently. I don't have to "give up" everything I love to eat. I just have to plan ahead to make that choice work with my other food choices of the day and my activity level.

With my incredible coach Laurie supporting me and cheering for me, I knew that a "slip" or a "setback" wasn't the end of the road. I became more resilient in my mind, and as my choices improved, so did my endurance for resisting temptations, and believing that each day was a new chance to make better choices. Regardless of the results from the day before, I wanted to "win" each day by keeping my numbers in my goal range. Everyday became a new chance to win.

I've been able to take the knowledge and information I gained in this class and help my immediate family, my extended family, and even my coworkers. I am so grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this class and learn how to make a healthy lifestyle work for me. If you would have told me at the beginning of the class that I would lose 55 pounds and change my life, I would not have believed you. If I can do it, anyone can do it.

My motto moving forward is: "Plan ahead to succeed, and track everything to achieve." Planning ahead means knowing what I'm eating that day. If I am eating out or with friends, then I have a plan for what I'll order. If I know where we are going, I look online for nutritional information and make my choice long before I get there. I plan ahead for my activity, making sure I have time reserved for a walk or biking. Then I make sure that I track all of my choices (food and activity) to make sure I'm hitting my goal for the day. I track throughout the day, and modify as needed. If my lunch choice was not a great one, I know I have to make extra time for activity, or recalculate and make even better choices for dinner.

Before the class, I was sure that I would eventually develop diabetes. It seemed inevitable considering my underlying endocrine disorder. Since being in the class, I feel confident that I can prevent it!

