

Why I Raise Money for the “*We Build People*” Scholarship Program At The YMCA

Originally, I volunteered to help raise money for the “*We Build People*” Scholarship Program of the Spears Branch of the YMCA of Greensboro out of guilt. It is very simple. I have access to all of the programs and services of any branch of the YMCA of Greensboro at no cost to myself. My Medicare Advantage insurance program pays for my membership because my staying healthy lowers my risk for sickness and disease. I work out at the fitness center at the Spears Branch three mornings a week, and so long as I stay fit and healthy my Medicare Advantage Program saves money. It seemed to me that because I get a free ride, I should give back. Every dollar I raise for the “*We Build People*” Scholarship Program goes directly to recipients of all ages who are economically disadvantaged and otherwise could not afford to be at the YMCA.

I got over feeling guilty and began to feel good about the money I was raising when I met Wyn Hrdlicka. Wyn is an instructor for an aquatics exercise program at the Spears Branch. The particular class she described to me is a muscle conditioning aquatics class for multiple sclerosis (MS) patients. It is the only aquatics class of its kind in either Guilford or Forsyth Counties. While in the water members of the class are able to improve their muscle tone. This helps them to withstand two of the most stubborn symptoms of the disease: fatigue and vertigo. The buoyancy of the water improves their sense of balance and enables them to be near normal physically. By improving their upper body strength, they remain more mobile and functional at whatever point they lose the use of their legs.

MS is a vicious and pernicious disease. With it you tend to deteriorate either physically or cognitively. Temporary plateaus are about the best one can hope for, and even these slowly deteriorate over time. Wyn and her one of a kind aquatics program are a positive counter-balance to the disease process of MS. She is Scottish through and through and absolutely will not give up on any member of this class. For many of them, it is the high point of their day. While the disease itself is a formidable crisis for anyone, the deterioration of bodily resources imposes additional financial crises for most people with the disease. For example, at whatever point one can no longer work, one typically loses health insurance as well. Upon applying for disability support, one discovers that it takes an average of three years to receive the first payment upon completion of the application process. Homemakers with MS are also at risk. “Fair weather” marriage partners who don’t take the “sickness” part of the marriage vow seriously sometimes abandon their partners and, once again, leave them without health insurance. Without health insurance MS patients are unable to afford one of the drugs, Tysabri, which helps to slow the disease process. Upon losing

one's health insurance, it is virtually impossible to renew it with MS as a pre-existing condition.

Take what I write here to heart. Contributions to the ***"We Build People"*** Scholarship Program provide real help to real people with real needs. More than anything else, Wyn's aquatics program for MS patients has helped me to understand why it is important for me to continue my own work as a volunteer at the Spears Branch of the Greensboro YMCA. To make a contribution in support of Wyn's aquatic program and other similar programs, simply fill out a pledge card or send money by check, credit card, or direct deposit. Information about all of these can be secured at the front desk, by phone, or on the Internet at www.spearsymca.org. Better yet, you can also volunteer and help to raise the money. Doing so can be very fulfilling make a big difference in the lives of other people.

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