



## Carmen's Y Story:

"When I moved to Kelowna almost 5 years ago, I had never really heard of the YMCA. I got involved with my friend as we wanted to start working out at the gym. I then started volunteering in the child minding once a week. My youngest daughter was only 18 months and she came with me every week. I found the volunteering very rewarding and I did it for two years.

My life then changed and I became a single mother. I decided to attend college and as a result, I had to drop the volunteering. After graduating, I needed to start full-time work and was frustrated and overwhelmed by the cost of daycare, especially for 3 children. I looked in the YMCA and was really excited about their after-school care for my two older children. I worked it out on paper and still felt that overwhelming feeling of "it's just not worth it". On the wage that I was going to be making at that time, I felt that I could not afford any type of childcare.

I was then informed of the Childcare Subsidy Program with the government. I applied and was given the benefits. The portion that I still needed to pay was still out of my budget. That was when the YMCA gave me the gift of allowing my children to attend their after-school program. With me making such a low income, I was told that they were able to give me financial assistance. That assistance was made possible through the Strong Kids Campaign. Although it was very emotional for me to accept this gift because I found myself struggling with my pride, I accepted the gift and I am so happy to have my children in this wonderful program.

Since the beginning, I have been so amazed with the child care workers that care for my children. They are amazing people that not only give my kids quality child care, but also care about me and the different endeavors that I have experienced in the last few months. The YMCA does build strong kids, families and communities. I wanted to share my story because I am so grateful."

**Everyone has a story, tell us yours. Email your Y Story to [aramchuk@ymca-ywca.com](mailto:aramchuk@ymca-ywca.com).**

