

HEALTHY LIVING

BARB FOLLETT: RETIRED AND INSPIRED

For longtime Eastside resident Barb Follett, 63, last year was one of big changes. After an early career as a music teacher and 30 years of employment in the telecommunications industry, Barb was laid off. Retirement made sense, so in this time of transition, she took stock of her priorities.



Cheri Pamer, Y Senior/Family Connector & Barb

Looking and feeling better were motivations, of course, but living on a fixed income as an older, single woman was another big factor – especially given her expensive medications. One day, Barb's friend mentioned that the Bellevue Family YMCA had lots of free or low-cost activities for community members. Barb had begun Weight Watchers and knew that physical activity would be crucial to her success.

She got involved with Bellevue Family's walking and hiking groups and then joined the Y during its fall membership promotion.

"Every day now, I've got something going on – aerobics, treadmill, power walking, the games group, etc.," says Barb. "I've lost 36 pounds, and I'm within 15 pounds of my goal weight."

Barb responded positively when recently approached to volunteer in the Y's Partners With Youth Annual Campaign.

Says Barb: "If I can help make it possible for someone else to experience all that the Y has to offer, then that's time well spent!"

"At the top of my list was doing something about my health," says Barb. "I've been a lifelong yo-yo dieter and have been diabetic for 15 years, relying on medications. I knew this was my time to come up with a plan that would stick."

Interested in the Y's healthy living programs for older adults? Contact your local Y to find out what your community offers.



SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL

The report cards are in for Seattle Public Schools, and the results are very low for southeast Seattle.

The district's recent self-study – part of its five-year plan to set goals, measure progress and report back to the community – states that southeast Seattle has no "high-performing" schools. Instead, the southeast has the 12 lowest-performing schools. Of Seattle's total population of students, forty percent of African American youth attend these lowest-performing schools as well as one-quarter of other minority groups. Quality education for all is an important focus not just for the future, but for right now.

For these Seattle students needing extra educational support, a determined group of organizations has launched the Southeast Seattle Network Vista Academy. The pilot school is a partnership between the YMCA of Greater Seattle, the Seattle Public Schools' Interagency Academy, the Southeast Seattle Youth Violence Prevention Initiative, the Willie Austin Foundation, the Seattle Storm and the Rainier Vista Boys & Girls Club (where it will be located).

The pilot school is a welcoming, hopeful place for 20 young people. It offers structured learning opportunities in reading, writing and math; skills in managing emotions through learning Aggression Replacement Training; mentorship; and a transition plan for each student so that a return to the traditional school is successful.

The school also includes training and support in digital media skills, provided by the Metrocenter YMCA's technology program, YTech. Students are learning to publish content and collaborate with peers using PugetSoundOff.org, an innovative, civic engagement website co-developed by the Y, the City of Seattle and the University of Washington Center for Communication and Civic Engagement.



Interested in helping southeast Seattle students succeed through the pilot school? Volunteer for career development talks, donate a digital camera or sponsor a field trip. Email ctugwell@seattleyymca.org.

