



RICHARD MERWIN, CHAIRMAN
GERRY VANDEMERWE, CEO

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
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Matt Kirby – Self Motivation Helps Teen Gain Strength & Lose Weight

Meet Matt Kirby, a 15-year-old County Y member, who, while active in school athletics, wanted to strengthen his muscles and reduce his weight. His mother Shelly Kirby, also a Y member, introduced Matt to County Y Program Director Kelly Gheres who got Matt involved in the Y's Youth Fitness Course, a four-week program for youth 11-14 years of age.

"This program groups kids of like ages together and introduces them to regular fitness routines, orients them to the wellness equipment and helps set short and longer term fitness goals," says Gheres. "Once they've completed the course, they've established fitness habits and often continue to exercise on their own."

Matt is regularly at the Y over the past six months and says that the results are what help to keep him motivated. "I began working out because I wanted to get healthier and since becoming dedicated to my workout routine, I've lost about 20 pounds. My physical change has been huge too – dropping several jeans sizes – and, just all around feeling better and more motivated."

Diet has been an important piece to Matt's success too – choosing healthier food options at home and at school. "Often times, we think that to live healthier, to lose weight, it's all about exercise," says Kelly. "Diet is critical – to lose one pound of weight, a person must eliminate approximately 3500 calories. So, it's about a total health approach of diet and exercise."

"He is much more energetic, and is very helpful around the house now," says Shelly. "He's an inspiration to all of us and motivates us to get moving too. Sometimes, he tells me he's going to the Y – and, it makes me think 'I should probably go too' – or get out of the house for a walk around the block or something."

Matt says he definitely plans on continuing his healthy habits as he pursues collegiate and possibly military goals.

To other young people who might like to lose a few pounds or gain more strength, Matt offers this advice, "Get started. You won't see results at first, but keep with it and you will."

YMCA OF GREATER ERIE WWW.YMCAERIE.ORG

Our Mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.



CORPORATE OFFICE
31 West 10th Street
Erie, PA 16501
(814) 452-1432

CAMP SHERWIN
8600 West Lake Road
Lake City, PA 16423
(814) 774-9416

COUNTY YMCA
12285 YMCA Drive
Edinboro, PA 16412
(814) 734-5700

DOWNTOWN YMCA
31 West 10th Street
Erie, PA 16501
(814) 452-3261

EASTSIDE YMCA
2101 Nagle Road
Erie, PA 16510
(814) 899-9622

GLENWOOD PARK YMCA
3727 Cherry Street
Erie, PA 16508
(814) 868-0867