

A Season of Change

You would think I would learn but every spring I am surprised by the shift from the steady winter season into the vitality of summer. It is a slow climb up the mountain followed by the thrilling descent into summer. The transition is drastic and comes in all shapes and sizes. Short, long, minor and major, visible and invisible, they are all a part of the Y experience.

It starts with school groups from all around SW MN visiting the Y for everything from After Prom Parties to Field Trips. It is an absolute joy to watch a busload of excited students swarm the Y. They love to swim, play sharks and minnows with the parachute, and just get away from learning for a few hours.

The Y is a large employer of college students and the SMSU graduation starts a multi-week shift of current staff heading back to their hometowns while past employees with local ties return for another summer at the Y. There is the sadness of losing graduates who are starting a new phase of life and the joy of welcoming back old friends for another summer of fun.

Camp Staff Training is a unique experience as a mix of old and new staff come together as a loose net group and end the week as a cohesive team. It reminds me of my Air Force experience at basic training as individuals began to fill roles which supported the larger operation. We have a wonderful mix of aspiring teachers, nurses, psychologists, recreation specialists and many other majors who share their passion with young campers for 12 weeks. Training can be intense and plans come together quickly to ensure it is "The Best Summer Ever" for the hundreds of campers.

Not to be outdone the Group Exercise Instructors are working on new classes and schedules. Lifeguards and Swim Lesson Instructors are being trained and gearing up for the rush of summer lessons. Even our every morning members have to prepare for the transition of small bodies and voices filling the Y throughout the day. Chair Yoga and Bone Builders see a shift in class location and a new normal settles into the facility.

In about 12 weeks we will put it in reverse with camp staff saying their goodbyes, brand new SMSU students starting employment and the returning veterans taking on new roles as trainers. Some early season school activities like the Kindness Retreat make an appearance but by and large a quiet will settle over the lobby. Soon coffee drinking and games of pepper will once again be the main attraction. At least for a few months.

