

## **“The Story of Lane Four”**

I’ve seen it all — first splashes, triumphs, fears overcome, and quiet moments of peace. My name is Lane Four and I stretch from one wall to the other, straight and steady, my blue-and-white dividers gently rippling with every movement.

Early mornings are my calmest time. The air is cool and still, and the first to greet me glide in with sleepy smiles, pulling on goggles and swim caps, ready to greet the day with purpose. Their strokes are rhythmic, almost meditative. Some count laps, some count thoughts, and some simply breathe — one, two, three — turn. Their dedication paints ripples of determination across my surface. I hold their rhythm, their routines, and their reflections.

Mid-morning, the quiet fades and the water aerobics warriors gather, each member wading in with smiles and stories. They move to music, their laughter blending with splashes. Some have known me for years; they’ve found strength and friendship here. I feel their resilience in every movement—how they push against the water’s resistance and find wellness, not just in body, but in spirit.

Soon after, I shift gears and my favorite form of chaos arrives — swim lessons. Tiny feet, preschoolers and older, slap across the deck, giggles bouncing off the walls. Some approach me bravely, others cling to the edge, eyes wide. I know their fears; I’ve felt the same hesitation in their gentle kicks. But then, with patient instructors beside them, they learn to trust me. Each lesson is more than splashes and strokes — it’s drowning prevention in action, giving every child the confidence and skills to be safe in and around the water. Their first moments of floating are magic — arms stretched wide, faces to the sky, realizing that water can hold them. I cradle those victories in my waves.

Then evening falls, and the swim team takes over. They arrive with focus and energy, their lanes assigned, their goals clear. The whistle blows, and I come alive under their speed. The water churns with power and precision as they race the clock, current, and themselves. I feel their drive, frustrations, and victories. I’ve carried them from lessons to leadership, from playful kicks to perfect strokes.

When summer comes, I buzz with the excitement of camp. The counselors lead long lines of kids to me, full of energy. They jump, splash, shout, and laugh until the air hums with joy. I teach them more than swimming — I teach teamwork, courage, and the thrill of trying something new. Every cannonball feels like a celebration, every swim test a step towards confidence.

When the lights dim and the pool grows quiet again, I rest. The echoes fade, but the memories remain — the joy of a child's first float, the rhythm of a lap swimmer's breath, the laughter of friends in motion, the thunder of a relay finish.

I am Lane Four. I've held countless stories, dreams, and splashes. Every drop of water that moves through me carries a piece of the Y's heart.