

Y STORY OF THE MONTH

Sometimes, our path takes us the long way to our destination. This month's Y-Story will introduce you to Dan Winters who is the YMCA's Facilities Director. This story will share his gifts and talents that he brings to our YMCA team and illustrate how Dan's faith in God's plan reminds us that the best outcome is with us in mind so we can be patient to see it come to fruition.

Dan grew up spending lots of time in the gym, first following an invitation to play football for his coach at the age of 14 and later as a coach himself. He lifted weights and helped young athletes succeed through strength and conditioning training. In his early 20s, Dan dreamed of working in a Nautilus facility to help people. Instead, he graduated from four different colleges and led employees in many areas throughout his career. For 30 years, he was active as a coach, science teacher, school administrator, and general advocate for youth development. During his teaching career, Dan was a member of our own Williams YMCA of Avery County and continued to lift weights. After retiring five years ago, Dan leaned into family business interests in construction such as tree work and stepped away from the YMCA. However, he realized that his body wasn't responding to the physical stress of work like it used to. When he found out the YMCA was hiring, he applied for two positions, partly to allow him the opportunity to return to his



exercise routine and to work for an organization whose values and principles aligned with his own. Dan was excited to see how God's plan for him was unfolding. So rather than working in a gym in his 20s, he would realize this dream closer to 60, overseeing the YMCA campus in Avery County and the Healthy Living Center in Mitchell County. Now, Dan is part of a cohesive, creative, and caring team of individuals who contribute to making our community a better place and improving the lives of everyone around them.

Being at the YMCA is more than simply a place to workout, it now adds to his life through community connection and improved health. Dan feels there is more to the YMCA than what you see - it is more than a first-class facility or place to improve your well-being. Now, he understands how the YMCA acts as a gathering place to foster connections that meet the needs of almost everyone, no matter if they are hungry, sick, lonely, recovering from cancer, have Parkinson's or another disease, or are simply passing through. This facility, its staff, and its members will go to the ends of the earth to help one another. Something he may not have noticed in his 20s. His story and experience remind us that although God's timing may not be our own, the benefits of waiting are worth it, and the rewards are unimaginable. Take a moment to say hello to Dan, and you will be reminded of this too!

[North Carolina Department of Public Safety](#) - for information about the safety of your county, open Shelters, Power Outages, and Individual Assistant Links.

[American Red Cross North Carolina Region](#) - to locate a loved one, donate, or find a shelter in your area.

[ReadyNC.gov](#) - for information about road closures, power outages, disaster assistance and Hurricane Guides.

[NC 211](#)- this is a free information and referral system for aid services.

[DriveNC.gov](#) - provides real time road conditions across North Carolina.

[NC Department of Health and Human Services](#) - provides recovery, mental health and other resources for those with disabilities and links to additional ways to help.

[Disaster Unemployment Assistance](#) - learn more and apply for disaster unemployment assistance (DUA).

What's Happening in Avery

Upcoming Pool Renovations

The YMCA Aquatics Team is excited to announce that the pool is getting a few updates this winter! The renovations include resurfacing the bottom of the pool and the pool deck to be more slip resistant.

Beginning December 1st, the Pool will be Closed for Renovations

We look forward to welcoming Members and Guests back to all of the exciting programs, lessons, and events in early 2025.



Helping You in Your Time of Need

The Healthy Opportunities Pilot Program or HOP is now accepting new applications for our extended pilot program. **If you are needing help with utilities, food, one time rent payment, etc. Please follow the link below:**
<https://impacthealth.org/hop/>



Youth Basketball

Youth Basketball is an exciting sport that combines team play and individual skills. With youth basketball, every child has a chance to participate in practices and games!

The Y utilizes volunteer coaches to focus on participation and fun! While basic skills of the game are developed through practices and games, every child learns sportsmanship



No After School Programs December 20th - January 7th

After the chaos of Helene, the youth department has had a great time getting back into the groove of things in our programming.

Our After School students have been busy growing plants, painting, and getting used to being back in school.

The elementary and middle school After



Meet Our Wellness Coach Craig!

Craig is one of our amazing Wellness Coaches! Many may know him already as he has been a member for several years, but if you haven't had the chance to get to know him we hope you'll stop by and say Hi! "I love meeting new people and helping folks meet their goals towards health and wellness. I have worked out at the Y since 08/09 as I prepared to deploy to Iraq. Since then I have been

To be eligible for pilot services, individuals must:

- Be enrolled in an eligible NC Medicaid health plan,
- Live in one of the state's three pilot regions, and
- Have a qualifying physical or behavioral health condition and,
- A qualifying social need or risk factor.

If you have additional questions about the program please contact [Anabel Zayas, Healthy Opportunities Pilot Program Director](#)

and values necessary to be successful in life.

Program Scholarships and subsidies are available. Please email: jessicah@ymcaavery.org for more information.

There is **NO** entry fee for spectators for our Youth Basketball League at the YMCA. Concessions are available for purchase on Game Days.

Dates: December 1 - February 1

Ages: 8-11 years
Practice days: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday (dependent on coach availability)
Blackburn Gym B

School programs will be closed from December 20th-January 7th. If you need any assistance during this time please reach out to [Maren Sumner, Avery County Youth Development Director](#), and Happy Holidays!

here regularly. Working out is great for meeting personal goals, but mentally, the Y has been a sanctuary of sorts for me. I have made great friends and enjoyed so much community and fellowship in this place. I even met my wife here!

I am currently working towards a national certification in personal training and hope to start building clientele for that soon. I look forward to meeting and serving folks in my community and giving back to a place that has meant so much to me." - Craig Clark, Wellness Coach

[Register Now](#)



Time To Reflect

As the YMCA wraps up the end of 2024 we have time to reflect on the amazing work that has taken place over the year. We were awarded another three year grant to support After School for K-5th graders in Avery County, the Youth Team partnered with several community partners to launch a Teen program that supports positive mental health, our Outreach teams, including the Healthy Opportunity Pilot program and Community Health Worker have helped hundreds of people gain access to the things they need to live healthy lives, and we introduced new Healthy living and Group Exercise programs in Mitchell



Back Together After The Hurricane

Much like many of our other programs and classes, our tight knit EnhanceFitness group hadn't been together for class for 7 weeks due to Hurricane Helene. After our first class back on November 13th, 2024 the group stayed after for a social hour brunch to catch up, vent to a friend, cry and laugh as they leaned on each other for support post hurricane as everyone is trying to rebuild and find "normal" again. Several of our class members shared "I wouldn't be able to clean up debris in my yard or renovate my home post hurricane if it hadn't been for EnhanceFitness giving me the strength and endurance I never knew I would need". This



Reindeer Run Reminder

There's still time to register and run for this years Virtual Reindeer Run. Our annual Reindeer Run typically takes place in downtown Banner Elk. Since our race path has not yet recovered from the hurricane damaged, we are transitioning the race to a virtual event this year. This means you can complete the race at the YMCA on a treadmill, outside in your neighborhood or completely somewhere else with a friend or family member. Your choice on where you complete it. This event runs through the end of December.



Why Join the Reindeer Run?

Every year the proceeds from our annual Reindeer Run go towards the YMCA's Y Access Program. The Y Access program provides subsidies for our family, friends, and neighbors who would benefit from joining the YMCA or a YMCA program but due to hardships are unable to pay. At the YMCA we are for all, and will not turn anyone away due to an inability to pay. In the aftermath of the Hurricane we have had 30+ member units who had to cancel their memberships. This year the race will have a specific focus of raising money to support any

County. There are plenty more actions, programs, plans, and individuals that we could talk about but ultimately we grateful to continue to serve our communities. If you would like to support the YMCA and all of the work we do year round we encourage you to make a donation or volunteer.

Donate Now

Visit New Giving Page

gathering was a pleasant reminder that not only is the YMCA a place to exercise to get stronger, but it is a place to socialize, lean on each other and a place to maintain independence and build back after a tragedy. Take this time today as your reading this to check on a friend and invite them for a walk around the track or to share a cup of coffee in the lobby at the YMCA!

How It Works:
Register for the Virtual Reindeer Run online or at our Membership Desk
Take a picture and tag the Williams YMCA of Avery County on Social Media

Cost To Race:
\$30 per racer -

"Better Together" Race Shirt included!

Reindeer Run Registration

family or individual who suffered a financial hardship with a YMCA membership from the hurricane.

The YMCA is more than a gym and a pool, it is place where our community leans on each other for support too. Be a part of our cause today!

If you or someone you know was impacted by hurricane Helene and you are interested in assistance towards your membership, please apply for the [Y Access program.](#)

What's Happening in Mitchell



After School Restart

We are excited to have our students back in the After School Programs at Greenlee and Gouge. It was wonderful to see their smiling faces and have them back with us. Our current site lead at Gouge Primary, Gladys Douglass Urove, who started with us at the beginning of the year will be leaving us to start a new career. We wish her the best of luck in her future growth.

We would like to welcome our new After School Tutors for the 2024-2025 school year (from right to left) Emma Arrowod, Haven Hughes and Jenises Pile-Velazquez. They will be wonderful additions to our program.

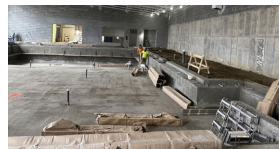


EnhanceFitness Resumed Last Session of 2024 at Mitchell Healthy Living Center

EnhanceFitness resumed last month after a brief pause due to the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Participants were excited to comeback together to be physically and socially active again.

This class is a great way to improve/prevent arthritis symptoms while making meaningful social connections with others and your community. If you or someone you know would benefit from attending the program please contact [Jessica Thomas, Healthy Living Director.](#)

The next offering will start in FEB. 2025! Space is limited but anyone who is interested will be considered for the next or following 16 week program



Construction Continues

Hurricane Helene caused massive damages across Western North Carolina. Fortunately, the building where the new Mitchell YMCA will be located is still in good shape and construction was able to resume. We are excited to continue moving forward with this project and look forward to opening next year!

The picture above is of the pool. The picture below is of the entrance to the YMCA.



Group Exercise at Mitchell County Healthy Living Center: ReFit and Zumba!

Looking for a place to be active as the weather changes or while outdoor recreation areas are recovering? Our group exercise classes are a great place for just that.

We are offering **REFIT** at 9 am on Thursdays and **Zumba** at 5:30 pm on Tuesdays.

1st visit is FREE, then \$5 per class. Class updates will be posted on the Williams YMCA of Avery County Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/williamsymcaavery/>. Or you can call the Mitchell County Healthy Living Center at [828-520-1379](tel:828-520-1379) for more information.

offering.

Mark Your Calendars



December Group Exercise

New Instructor for Zumba Fitness

Zumba lets you take the work out of workout, by mixing low-intensity and high-intensity moves for an interval style, calorie burning dance fitness party! Join Vanessa Phillips on Tuesdays at 5:30 pm for an amazing class!

[Download Avery Group Exercise Schedule](#)

[Download Mitchell Group Exercise Opportunities](#)



December Athletics

Club Volleyball

We are hosting a Club Volleyball program where the participant's will learn and improve various skills, position play and gain experience through focused practices in their off-season. All skill levels welcome.

December 3 - February 4 Ages: 8-14 years old

8-10 years old: 5:30pm - 6:30pm

11-14 years old: 6:30pm - 7:30pm

Blackburn Gym B

[8 - 10 Year old Register Here](#)

[11-14 Years old Register Here](#)

[Download Blackburn Athletic Facility Schedule](#)

Giving Back

Do you want to be part of the change and give back to the Avery and Mitchell County Communities? There are a variety of ways you can get involved with the Williams YMCA of Avery County!

[Donate](#)

Reinvest in the community through the programs and services offered by the YMCA, including drowning prevention programs, outreach services addressing social isolation and food insecurity, after school and summer camp programs that help youth find new and exciting ways to learn and connect with their peers, and Healthy Living programs that help those living with Chronic Diseases manage their symptoms.

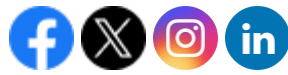
[Volunteer](#)

Give the gift of your time and skills in programs that change the lives of children, teens, adults, families, and seniors. Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities:

- ***Outreach - Aid with Hurricane Helene Donation Distribution***
- ***Outreach - Food Delivery and Senior Outreach***



Connect with us on:



Williams YMCA of Avery County | 436 Hospital Drive, PO Box 707 Linville, NC 28646

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