



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## Y STORY OF THE MONTH

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Most days, it's not hard to find inspiration at the YMCA, especially when you see so much effort and determination found across all of the programs and services in which our members participate. Many discover that inspiration in the form of a personal trainer helping them achieve their goals and dreams in the Wellness Center or the Healthy Living Room. This month's Y-Story will introduce you to Deana Acklin, who is hard to miss with her giant smile and determined commitment to improving the lives of everyone around her.



Deana has worked in the fitness industry for fifteen years as a group fitness instructor in the military and other facilities, but until she moved to Avery County, she had never worked in a YMCA. Deana moved to the High Country six years ago. When she was 5, Deana had open heart surgery for congenital heart disease. She spent a long time in recovery and was told she would have a very limited lifestyle, not allowing her to ride her bike or be very active. She had to learn what she was capable of, both in her mind and body; and through that process, she found her strength. She realized that her limits should not be imposed on her by others, and that she was able to do many things she had been told she would never have the ability to experience. Today, you'll find her outside on a bike, on a trail, or even paddling, kayaking, or cycling with disabled athletes.

Shortly after moving to the area, she was excited to see a YMCA nearby and stopped in for a tour. Deana learned about many of the Y's programs, and she was particularly interested in the Delay the Disease Parkinson's program, a Healthy Living Program specifically designed to delay the onset of Parkinson's signs and symptoms through strength, cardiovascular, and cognitive training. Before she left that day, she asked how she could help and soon began as an assistant in the Delay the Disease class. Later, she expanded her services at the YMCA and became a personal trainer and Adaptive Fitness Specialist focusing on seniors and those with physical and cognitive disabilities.

The COVID shutdown made Deana's heart sick, especially when several of her clients found themselves separated from their loved ones, friends, and the Y and the goals they had there. For many, going to the YMCA had been their only means of movement and fitness. Months later, seeing the physical and mental deterioration that had occurred during the shutdown, Deana made a commitment to herself that she would find a way to continue helping clients meet their

adaptive fitness goals. Even if that meant going to a client's home and exercising in the yard or walking around the block, searching for the appropriate way for each client to continue their fitness journey, she would do anything she could to overcome obstacles for her clients. Her objective is to assist seniors and people with permanent disabilities to re-engage with their grandchildren and nature and even dust off some old fitness goals like hiking a trail or riding a bike. By encouraging her clients, modifying workout routines, and teaching members where their strengths are, she helps them to realize their potential, aim higher than they imagined, and regain some independence and growth.

Deana believes that the older you get, the more you need fitness and that life in your 90s can be spent enjoying activities with your children, grandchildren, and friends. She also believes that the question should not be "Why should I go to the Y?" instead, it should be "Why haven't I been yet?". No matter how old you are, in your 20s or 90s, Deana believes you can be fit, healthy, functional, joyful, fulfilling, and vibrant at any age, especially when your fitness center is also your community center. "Just show up," Deana urges, "and see what happens!". You will find that you are inspired by her, too!

See you at the Y!

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## Jesse Pope Awarded Person of the Year

Jesse Pope, the President and Executive Director of the Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation, was awarded Banner Elk's Person of the Year on January 10th. Jesse has been serving on the Board of Directors for the Williams YMCA of Avery County since 2017. The Banner Elk Person of the Year award is given to an individual who has made a positive impact in their service to the Banner Elk Community. Congratulations, Jesse!

[Click to Read the Write-Up](#)

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## What's Happening in Avery



### What is H.O.P.?

The Healthy Opportunities Pilot is the nation's first comprehensive program to test evidence-based, nonmedical interventions which are designed to improve the health of Medicaid beneficiaries



### Spring Soccer Season

Registration is now open for our Spring Soccer Season. **Early registration is open until February 11th.**

Ages:



### Women On Weights

WOW is what you'll be saying once you try our Women On Weights program **beginning February 5th.** This 4-week program for Women is intended to



### 24/7 Facility Access

Curious about 24 Hour Access? Sign up during the month of February and **experience the benefits at no cost until March 2024.** Then, continue to enjoy your

while reducing costs. These interventions include healthy meals and nutrition classes, transportation to grocery stores or job interviews, mold remediation and housing safety inspections, parenting curriculum, and home visiting services, and linkages to legal support. Detailed information on pilot services and eligibility can be found on the NCDHHS website and this FAQ document.

Do I Qualify?



### Summer Camp Information

**Summer Camp registration opens on Monday, April 22nd.**

Summer Camp will operate from June 3rd to August 2nd from 7:30am-5:30pm, Monday - Friday.

Summer Camp is open and available to all current Avery County School Students (including private school attendees) in grades Kindergarten-5th (2023-2024 academic year) and Avery County Residents that are currently homeschooled in Kindergarten - 5th grades.

4-11 (Pre-K - 5th Grade)

Season Dates:  
March 18th - May 23rd

Game Days:  
Saturday Mornings

Put Me on a Team!

Y-Access Info

teach you the basics of how to strength train properly to minimize injury and develop strong muscles and bones. Class will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4-5pm. \$60 for Members, \$80 for Non-YMCA Members. Reach out to Erin Spear at [Erins@ymcaavery.org](mailto:Erins@ymcaavery.org) for more information.

Sign Me Up



### SPLASH Volunteers Needed!

Our Kindergarten SPLASH program **begins March 11th and we need volunteers** for this lifechanging program.

SPLASH is a program that teaches children the importance of Water Safety and develops basic self-rescue skills.

No formal or instructional swimming experience is necessary to volunteer.

I'd like to volunteer!



### Livestrong Program Begins!

Livestrong for Cancer Survivors is **beginning February 12th**. We consider someone a Survivor from the moment of diagnosis, through treatment, and everything in between.

You do not have to be a member to join and there is no cost to join. Reach out to Chris Kennedy for more information.

Email Chris

membership upgrade for just \$5 per month.

Stop by the Welcome Desk to learn more or sign up!

Tell Me More

Platinum Transparency 2024

Candid.

### Fundraising Efforts

We recently earned our Candid Platinum Seal of Transparency! This seal ensures that we are providing the information you need to support our work with trust and confidence. Check out our nonprofit profile to keep up to date with our impact,

Show Me the Profile

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## What's Happening in Mitchell

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### Exciting Afterschool Staff Updates

We would like to take a moment to thank our newest site coordinator, Vicky Young. Vicky has been promoted from a Counselor to a Site Coordinator and is doing an outstanding job. We are so happy to have her on our staff!

We would also like to welcome back Kendra Riddle. She has returned as an Afterschool Counselor and is making a positive impact with our students in the After School Program in Mitchell County.

### Community Health Worker Job Opening

Community Health Workers are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of and/or have a close understanding of the community served. This relationship enables the worker to serve as a connection between health/social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and cultural competence of service delivery. The primary focus of this work will be general community outreach, health education and promotion, collaboration with public health, primary care, and community-based organizations, and focused resource coordination for individuals and families of the Avery, Mitchell and Yancey County communities to assist with overall improved health equity outcomes.

[Apply Now](#)

### Delay the Disease

On January 9th, the Mitchell County Healthy Living Center began a new session of the Delay the Disease program, working with community members with a Parkinson's diagnosis. We still have a few openings for this evidence-based program. If you or anyone you know would like more information, please contact Jessica Thomas by phone or email!

[Call Jessica](#)

[Email Jessica](#)

### Zumba Class Beginning!

Group Exercise options are growing in Mitchell County!

Zumba is coming to the Mitchell County Healthy Living Center! Sarah Pierce will be leading this Latin inspired dance fitness class on Tuesdays and Thursdays 5:30-6:30pm beginning Tuesday, February 6th.

There is a Drop-in Rate of \$5.

Let's get movin' together!

## Future YMCA Events

Click the buttons below to visit our upcoming event pages where you can find out more information regarding these programs, discover who the organizer or instructor is, and register yourself, or your child, for these upcoming events!

[3rd-5th Grade Volleyball](#)

[Women On Weights](#)

[Free Tax Preparation](#)

Click the button below and it will take you to our main YMCA's Event Page. This is a central hub

for events happening in and around your YMCA Facilities.

[Click to See Our Full Calendar!](#)

## Get Moving With Us!



### **February Group Exercise**

It may be cold outside, but our Group Fitness Classes really heat things up!

Come and join us on Friday, February 2nd, at 12pm for a new BODYPUMP Release.

[Download Group Exercise Schedule](#)



### **February Athletics**

Did you know we are now opening the Blackburn Athletic Facility at 3 pm? Due to high demand, we have adjusted our evening hours to open earlier for all our members and guests. Download our schedules to see what's going on.

[Download Blackburn Athletic Schedule](#)

[Download Fieldhouse Schedule](#)



### **February Aquatics**

Have you signed your child up for our YMCA Swim Team? Any child in Kindergarten - 5th grade can participate. Reach out to our Aquatics Director, Faith Boyette, by clicking the button below.

[Download Aquatics Schedule](#)

[Email Faith](#)

Connect with us on:



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