



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Y STORY OF THE MONTH

Stephen “Lightning” Davis: Calm, Cool, and Cardio-Ready

If you’ve rolled into the Williams YMCA at the crack of dawn, squinting through sleep and clutching your water bottle like a lifeline, chances are you’ve seen Stephen “Lightning” Davis. He’s that friendly, early-bird regular who’s already finished his warmup before the front door finishes swinging open. Quiet, humble, and dedicated, Lightning is the kind of member every YMCA dreams of—but as we recently found out, he’s also the kind of guy you hope is around in an emergency.

Lightning has been part of the Williams YMCA of Avery County family for over 13 years. He’s not just a member; he’s a fixture. Working out five days a week, his steady consistency is something many of us aspire to but sometimes trade for pancakes. His family is part of the Y community too - active in basketball, baseball, and football - and, in fact, where he met his future wife, Jasmine, ten years ago! Even as his life has changed over the years, Lightning remains an encouraging presence in the early morning hours.



A native of Avery County and a lineman with Mountain Electric Co-Op for 27 years, Lightning has maintained his CPR certification every two years like clockwork. “It’s always just been part of the job,” Lightning stated. That is, until recently—when those years of training were called into action. A fellow member collapsed in the Wellness Center, and in a moment that felt straight out of a movie, several members and staff sprang into action. Lightning stepped forward and began CPR. It was the first time he’d ever had to use those skills outside of training—and he nailed it. Thanks to the quick response of Lightning, staff and others on site, and the fast arrival of EMS, CPR was delivered immediately. The outcome? A miracle. The member survived without *any damage* to the heart. That’s right—not only did our community hero help save a life, but he helped preserve a full, healthy future for someone we’ll all be fist-bumping and high-fiving at the water fountain again soon.

Ask Lightning about it, and he’ll probably just shrug and say he was in the right place at the right time. But we know it was more than that—it was years of quiet preparation, commitment, and care. It was community in action. Around here, we talk a lot about how the Y isn’t just a gym—it’s a gathering of friends, neighbors, and families who show up for each other, whether it’s spotting a bench press or stepping in when it really counts.

So next time you see Lightning—likely finishing up a set before most of us have had coffee—give him a smile and a “thank you.” He may not ask for the spotlight, but we’re shining it on him anyway. Because around here, heroes don’t wear capes. They wear gym shoes, carry water bottles, and help someone else see the next beautiful Avery County sunrise.

What's Happening in Avery



National Senior Health and Fitness Day 2025

We want to give a huge THANK YOU! to all volunteers and sponsors, especially our title sponsor, Blue Cross Blue Shield of NC from the Boone Center, for making this year's NSH&FD event a success! Just over 200 friends and neighbors and community members stopped in, sharing resources, successes, good food, and access to the YMCA for the day.

We'll see you again next year and can't wait to build more strong connections in our community!



So, You Want to Know How to Play Pickleball?

We will continue to hold monthly Pickleball Clinics on Fridays at the end of each month. Join us on **June 27, 2025, from 4:00 - 6:00 pm**. Keep an eye on our social media for upcoming clinic dates!

Don't forget we have new programs are coming soon! We are planning multiple outdoor recreation activities for this summer.

Reach out to [Nathan McDavid, our Recreation Director](#), for more details!

Email Nathan



Back to School Bash - Supply Needs

The Avery Youth Department will be working with R.A.C.E (Resilient Avery Community Engagement), Western Youth Network, and Camp Linhaven to provide a Back to School Bash on **Thursday, July 31st from 4:00 pm-7:00 pm** for students in Avery County to receive school supplies and resources.

If you have the means to, we are asking for school supply donations that can be dropped off or mailed to the YMCA from **June 2nd-July 25th**. To see the supply needs for students in Avery County click the button below!

We will continue to update the document as needs arise.

Supply List!



New Member Orientation!

Did you know a new YMCA membership includes 4 Sessions with a Wellness Coach for Orientation to the Wellness Center? In your Sessions, one of our wellness coaches will help start you on your fitness journey by assisting you in the following ways:

- *Guide you through proper use of each piece of strength and cardio equipment,
- *Explain proper form, usage, and adjustments to suit your fitness levels and goals,
- *Help build general knowledge and confidence in using the equipment safely and effectively,
- *Promote safe, effective workouts,
- *Set a foundation for a successful fitness journey.

Stop by the Membership or Wellness Desk to sign up for your Sessions today!



Big News for Mitchell County Families!

We're thrilled to share that the Williams YMCA of Avery County has been awarded 21st Century Community Learning Center (21CCLC) funding for Cohort 18! This incredible grant secures the future of our Mitchell County



Aquatics

Now Hiring Lifeguards for the Summer!

Join our Lifeguard Training Course this summer to start your job as a Lifeguard!



Are You a Cancer Survivor?

June is National Cancer Survivor's Month!

LIVESTRONG at the YMCA is an evidence-based health and fitness program for adult cancer



Meet April!

As you come into the Williams YMCA of Avery County, I'm sure you've encountered many smiling faces! One familiar one is our very own April

After School program for the next three years—including daily After School programming for K–8th graders and a brand-new K–5th summer camp launching in 2026. With support from Mitchell County Schools and partners like PENLAND School of Craft and 4H, students will enjoy tutoring, snacks, and enriching activities at multiple sites across the county. Questions? Contact Youth Director Guy Blankenship for more details!

Email Guy
Blankenship

You must be 15 years old, be able to work at least two shifts per week, and possess excellent customer service skills. Email [Faith Boyette](#), [Aquatics Director](#) for more info or to register.

Email Faith

survivors. Patients will build muscle mass and strength, increased flexibility and endurance, and improve energy levels and self-esteem.

When: June 9-Aug. 27
Mon/Wed 1-2:30pm

Where: Williams YMCA of Avery County

Cost: No cost to program participants

Contact: Chris Kennedy at [828-737-5500](tel:828-737-5500) or click the button below for more info.

We look forward to moving with you!

Email Chris

Dugger. April embodies what the Y is all about. Always ready with a helpful answer to your questions, a smile or a simple, “How are you today” April is truly an asset to our Y. You can also find her working hard taking our aquatic center’s water fit class, which she highly recommends. Please make sure you stop by our Welcome Desk and say hello to April and all of our membership staff! We look forward to serving you.

Want to join the YMCA for just the summer months? No problem! Just let our Welcome Desk staff know, and we’ll get you set up!

What's Happening in Mitchell



Congratulations to our Great Staff!

It has been a challenging yet fun year at the same time. We would like to send out a special Thank You and recognize our awesome student staff members:

Jenises Pile-Velazquez: Jenises will be attending A-B Tech with plans to attend ECU,

Emma Arrowood: Emma will be attending ETSU,

Haven Hughes: Haven plans on attending



Group Exercise in Mitchell County

Looking for a group class to plug into? We have Move and Tone on **Mondays and Wednesdays at 9:00 am**. This class incorporates low impact cardio with mat/core work on Mondays and weights on Wednesdays.

We also have Refit on **Tuesdays and Thursdays at 9:00 am**. REFIT is a cardio-focused dance fitness workout for all fitness levels, combining powerful, easy-to-follow dance moves with uplifting, positive music. The class emphasizes not just



Anabel Zayas receives CHW certification!

What is a Community Health Worker (CHW)?

“A frontline public health worker who is a trusted member of and/or has an unusually close understanding of the community served. This trusting relationship enables the worker to serve as a liaison /link /intermediary between health and social services and the community to facilitate access to services and improve the quality and



Mitchell YMCA COMING SOON!

We had an exciting and fun day on Saturday, May 31st at the brand-new Mitchell YMCA, where several friends and neighbors joined the Y as Charter Members received information and tours of the facility and pool, and learned about programs and opportunities for camp and other wellness and youth programs. The YMCA plans to open in mid-July so watch out for more info and updates coming soon!

We can't wait to see you in Mitchell County at the

Mayland and then transferring,

Joselyn Hiott Rule:

Joselyn is planning on attending UNCW.

Jennifer Woody:

Jennifer is our newest After School counselor, currently attending Mayland Early College and planning to finish next year.

We are very happy to have such a wonderful, caring staff members to work with the students and cannot wait to see what the future holds for them.

We want to wish them good luck and say a huge THANK YOU! to all of them for their hard work and dedication!

physical fitness but also mental and emotional well-being, helping participants to feel hopeful, confident, and connected.

Join us for these classes at the Healthy Living Center at 275 Oak Ave. and be on the lookout for more group exercise options as we transition into our new facility!

Classes are free to Y Members. Charter Members and Non-Members receive the first class for free, then pay \$5 per class after that. See you there!

Call or email Jessica Thomas [828-520-1379](tel:828-520-1379) for more information!

[Email Jessica](#)

cultural competence of service delivery." -NC DHHS Community Health Workers

We are thrilled that Anabel Zayas has officially earned her Community Health Worker Certification through the North Carolina Community Health Worker Association. This certification will give Anabel access to ongoing training, certification, networking, and mentorship opportunities within the Community Health Worker Association. These experiences along with her own will help strengthen the YMCA's Community Outreach services across Avery and Mitchell Counties!

YMCA!!

Mark Your Calendars



June Group Exercise

Bootcamp in June!

Join Kathleen on **Thursdays at 9:00 am** through the month of June for Bootcamp! Bootcamp is a fun, non-traditional way to get in shape and feel great! YMCA Bootcamp caters to all fitness levels from the beginner through advanced, utilizing resistance training with strength equipment and body weight.

[Download Avery Group Exercise Schedule](#)



June Athletics

Blackburn Gym A Closure

From **June 9th to August 1st**, Gym A of our Blackburn facility will be reserved for our Summer Day Camp. Gym B, and all other Blackburn facilities (batting cages, golf simulator, Field House) will operate as normal!

[Download Blackburn Athletic Facility Schedule](#)

[Download O'Connell Field House](#)



June Aquatics

New Youth Swim Clinic

We are adding a new swim clinic for kids ages K-5th grade for \$8 per week!

Thursdays from 4-5:00 pm

They'll work on building stroke technique and stamina. Email Faith for more info or to sign up!

[Download Aquatics Schedule](#)

[Email Faith](#)

Download Mitchell
Group Exercise
Opportunities

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:

- **Summer Camp**
- **Youth Department (June 2-6)**
- **Outreach**



Connect with us on:



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

You received this because you are subscribed to emails from the Williams YMCA of Avery County.

[Manage Email Preferences](#)