



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Y STORY OF THE MONTH

Philip and Kelly Hatcher

Philip and Kelly Hatcher celebrated his 7th year of being alive and overcoming change every day, on what Philip and Kelly consider his second birthday!

Prior to 7 years ago Philip and Kelly were avid athletes competing in triathlons and mountain biking competitions. In fact, Philip and Kelly were training for a 100-mile mountain bike race in Colorado later that year when one of their friends, Chris, came to town for his own 50-mile cycling road race and Philip decided to join him. After the race Philip and Kelly took Chris on a Mountain Bike trail that would change their lives forever. While going around a bend, Philip came across a tree that had fallen in the middle of the trail. "I tried to bunny hop over the tree but either my front tire or back tire – I can't remember – hit the tree and



I knew I messed up." Philip told us as he remembered the ride.

"I hit the ground and don't remember much after that until Kelly sat me up and started praying." What Philip didn't know until after the accident was that when he landed, he cracked his C3 vertebra, damaging the spinal cord in his neck. The break was less than a 1/8th of an inch away from damaging the C2 which is responsible for protecting the airway, causing him to have a hard time breathing. Kelly had to resuscitate him three times while Chris rode out of the trail to go get help. Miraculously, Chris was able to make his way to a gas station and call 9-1-1. The emergency rescue team was able to get Philip out and on a helicopter to Asheville where he underwent surgery for nearly 10 hours. The doctors told Kelly that he suffered a "Christopher Reeve" break resulting in damage to the spinal cord meaning he would never walk or ride again. When Kelly was preparing with friends and family to see Philip after his surgery she quickly said, "Don't tell him that." A few days later, the impossible happened, Philip was able to move his toes! The Doctors re-x-rayed his spine and saw that instead of a full break in his C3, it was only a partial break. Meaning it was possible for Philip to regain some mobility and functionality.

The months following the accident were long and hard as Philip started Physical (PT) and Occupational Therapy (OT) while on a ventilator and began to figure out how their life was going to look after this accident. Philip's main goal was to walk again. So that's what his PT and OT teams focused on. Before he was discharged from the hospital 5 months later, he was not only standing but was starting to take a few steps! That's when Philip started to come to the YMCA. Kelly had been a member of the Williams YMCA of Avery County since 2016 and had gotten to know the Wellness Director Bonnie. After hearing about the accident she told Kelly about the Y Access program which supports people facing financial or medical challenges. It was through the Y Access program that Philip and Kelly were able to continue coming to the YMCA to see their friends and feel better. For a few years Philip and Kelly would go to physical therapy and walk the greenway in Morganton and then come to the YMCA and workout in the pool or in the wellness center, until COVID-19 hit and shut everything down. The shutdown not only included the YMCA but Physical Therapy and other places where Philip was working to regain his mobility.

When the YMCA reopened, Philip was able to connect with Deana Acklin, a personal trainer and Healthy Living Instructor. Deana quickly told Philip that if his goal was to improve his mobility then he would need to get started on a workout regimen that was based in strength. Since Deana and Philip started working together, he has made great strides in his functionality. As Philip continued to recount his story, he attributes his success to a number of amazing people and groups including family, friends, God and the

YMCA, but especially Kelly. "Everyone at the Y is super nice and supportive," Philip said, "you don't get that type of feeling at other gyms. The Wellness Center is more than a place to work out, it's a place to connect with others." Due to his strides both in the Y and with his support team he is part of only 8% of quadriplegics who is able to walk. Philip is now a motivational speaker and continues to embrace change while learning how to overcome the challenges that come with it. Next time you are at the Y and see him walking laps on the track or lifting weights be sure to stop by and say hi!

What's Happening in Avery



Cool Off on a Community Hike!

Community Hiking Trips give everyone an opportunity to get outside and enjoy the fellowship of good friends while being active. You'll have a blast climbing up and down hills, over logs, and over the occasional picnic lunch.

Registration is required.

Join us for the next hike on July 16th!

Click below to register or find out more!

[Email Sheila](#)



Fall Spirit Class Registration Open!

Join us for another spectacular session of SPIRIT brought to you in partnership with the dance team of Lees-McRae College. This program will focus on the foundations of dance through the Game Day performance styles of jazz, hip-hop and pom. The 5-week program will culminate in a Spirit Showcase open to the public and be held in our Blackburn Athletic Facility. No experience is necessary to come dance with the Bobcats!

Dates: Tuesdays from Aug 26th - Sept 30th:
Pre-K-2nd:
5:30 - 6:15pm
3rd - 6th:
6:30 - 7:15pm

Cost: \$60 members - \$80 non-members

Click to register:

[Pre K - 2nd Grade](#)

[3rd - 6th Grade](#)

[Email Nathan](#)



Summer Camp Fun!

We are in the middle of summer camp programming and are having tons of summer fun; swimming, taking field trips and playing with friends!

Planning for After School is underway, and registration will open on August 1st at Banner Elk, Crossnore, Freedom Trail, Newland Elementary, and Riverside. Watch for more information to come!



Welcome back to the Wellness Center!

Summer has arrived, bringing warm temperatures, new seasonal members, and the occasional summer storm. We're excited to welcome so many fresh faces to the Wellness Center! To help everyone enjoy their workouts, please remember to limit your time on cardio equipment to 30 minutes when others are waiting. Thank you for helping keep our Wellness Center a friendly, energizing place to break a sweat—even on the busiest days!



Build Brighter Futures

Let's make this summer a season of growth, joy, and safety for every child in our community!

Your donation supports swim lessons through the Michael L. Leonard Swim Fund, meals for local families, and nurturing programs where kids thrive. Just \$100 gives 4 lessons that build confidence and save lives. Together, we can lift up more children in Avery and Mitchell Counties—don't wait to make a difference. Give today!

[Donate Now!](#)



Now Hiring Lifeguards

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

If you are 15 years old, can work at least two shifts per week, and possess excellent customer service skills, we have awesome opportunities to share your skills with local friends and neighbors, and grow with the YMCA. Click below for more info or to register.

[Email Faith](#)



Grow with our Healthy Living Programs!

We're excited to welcome **Abby Barber** to the Healthy Living Team! Abby joins us from the First Coast YMCA in Jacksonville, FL. She's already been busy supporting the Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring Program, EnhanceFitness, and Moving Mountains with Parkinson's in Spruce Pine. Her smile is contagious—be sure to say hello and help her feel at home!



Improve Your Health While Having Fun!

Join us for our July BLAST INTO CLASS CHALLENGE! Stop by our Welcome Desk and pick up your Challenge Form, then during the month of July, take 12 classes, any classes; for example, Stretch, Tone, and Balance three times a week, or a mixture of several different classes, it doesn't matter as long as it adds up to 12 within the 31 days of July!

As you take the classes, please have the instructors fill out the form and then turn it back into the welcome desk! The drawing will take place on July 31st at 8:00 pm and you could win a free month's membership or a YMCA t-shirt!

What's Happening in Mitchell



Exciting Times on the Horizon!

With summer in full swing, we're excited to share some great news!

Our new facility is opening soon, and we'll begin hosting some After-School events there.



Now Hiring Smiling Faces at the Mitchell Y!

Are you passionate about helping people reach their health goals and improve their well-being? We're hiring for opening, mid-day, and closing shifts in our Wellness Center. Just two shifts per week qualify you for an employee



Healthy Opportunities Pilot Program Paused

We are saddened to inform our neighbors and community members that our Healthy Opportunities Pilot Program has been put on pause until there is a further funding available for the western region of North Carolina. If you or anyone you know in Avery, Mitchell, or Yancey County needs any



You're Invited to the Ribbon Cutting!

We are thrilled to welcome our friends and neighbors to the **Mitchell County YMCA!**

Join us for our Ribbon Cutting celebration on **July 11, 2025**,

Thanks to renewed funding, the program will expand next school year with more sites and students. We'll be hiring new team members to support this growth—watch for details on job opportunities and student registration coming soon!

membership!
 We're also looking for Personal Trainers. If you're certified—or interested in YMCA training—we'd love to hear from you. Plus, we need Group Exercise Instructors! Whether you're certified, have experience leading classes, or want to train in the programs you enjoy, this is a great opportunity to get involved.

Please call Jessica Thomas, Healthy Living Director, at [\(828\) 520-1379](tel:8285201379), or click below for more info!

[Email Jessica](#)

assistance, please reach out to our Community Health Worker, Anabel Zayas. As soon as we have more information about the program, we will inform the community.

[Email Anabel](#)

from 4:00–7:00 PM at the new YMCA facility in the Pinebridge Center, Spruce Pine.

Address:
97 Pinebridge Ave,
Spruce Pine, NC
28777

Enjoy food trucks, bounce houses, music, and fun as we celebrate with our community, donors, and staff. The Y officially opens to Charter Members on **July 14** and to all members on **July 21**. We can't wait to see you there!

Mark Your Calendars



July Group Exercise

Sherri is back!

Join Sherri on **Fridays at 9:45 am** through the month of July for the Dance Fitness Class! Dance Fitness combines music, movement and choreography to help you burn away calories - and stress - in a fun and supportive environment!

[Download Avery Group Exercise Schedule](#)

[Download Mitchell Group Exercise July 1 - 13th](#)

[Download Mitchell Group Exercise July 14th - 31st](#)



July 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 Schedule](#)



July Aquatics

Swim Lessons

Our swim lessons are currently on a wait list, however, click the tab below for information about the upcoming Swim Club session, group swim lessons and other activities happening at the pool this summer!

[Download Aquatics Schedule](#)

[Aquatics Program Information](#)

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**
- **Outreach/Hikes**



Connect with us on:



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

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