



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

#YCONS OF THE MONTH

Finding Home, Finding Hope: Amanda & Miles' Story

At the Williams YMCA of Avery County, we are so much more than just a “gym and swim.” We offer programs for individuals from 6 weeks old to 100+! One of our newer programs is the Hugh Chapman Early Learning Center (ELC), our 5-Star full-day child care facility. The center officially opened in October 2025 and, in just eight months of operation, has already begun changing lives.

Two lives that have certainly been impacted by the ELC are Amanda Hamrick and her son, Miles. Amanda is an Avery County native, and although she moved away for a time, she returned home the same month our ELC opened to the public—timing she described as a “God thing.”



Miles was born in 2021, and when he was about 18 months old, Amanda began noticing signs that led her to refer him to the Children’s Developmental Services Agency for Early Intervention. Therapy began at 20 months, and after a long journey, Miles was diagnosed with Level 2 Autism at age 3. Once Amanda and Miles moved back to Avery County, she prayed for a place where Miles could grow in a classroom setting, while also having all his therapies and services implemented in one place. The Hugh Chapman Early Learning Center became that answered prayer. When they learned about the ELC, Amanda shared that “the enrollment process was smooth, and Miles was able to start in a smaller classroom, which was perfect for him.”

Not only was getting plugged in a great experience for their family, but the developmental growth Miles has experienced has been life-changing for both him and his mom. When he enrolled at the ELC, he was nonverbal, communicating only through sign language and an AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) device. Recently, the day before his fifth birthday, he spent the entire day communicating *without* his device!

The ELC has helped Miles grow developmentally, socially, and emotionally, and Amanda credits his teachers for much of that progress. She shared that they “provide for his growth” by letting him take chances, encouraging him to try new things, welcoming the resources he needs, and treating him as an equal. She also spoke highly of the support she has received as a parent: “I am supported and loved on, just as much as my son. The parent app keeps me updated and helps me feel safe and secure with him there. It’s a relief knowing that he is getting what he needs and that he’s safe.”

For any parent of a 2-5-year-old looking for a safe, welcoming, and nurturing early learning environment, we hope Amanda and Miles’ story encourages you to reach out and learn more about how the Hugh Chapman Early Learning Center can serve your family. Their journey is a powerful reminder that the Y is more than a place for fitness—it is a place where children grow, families find support, and lives are transformed.

What's Happening



Building Confidence & Strong Swimmers!

This past month, the YMCA Aquatics Department celebrated a meaningful milestone as **eight** youth passed their swim test for the very first time.

Aquatics Director, Faith Boyette, has worked with many of these children on and off for the past three years through camp, Splash, and other YMCA programs, witnessing their growth and perseverance along the way. However, after coming in every day during their spring break they finally were able to pass the test!

At the Y, moments like this reflect the heart of our mission. Learning to swim is not only a critical life skill, but also an opportunity to build confidence, resilience, and a sense of accomplishment. These eight swimmers didn't just pass a test—they took an important step forward in their journey, both in and out of the water.



Pickleball for Parkinson's Makes a Meaningful Impact

Pickleball for Parkinson's was more than just a tournament—it was a powerful community effort that brought people together to support individuals living with Parkinson's disease. Proceeds from the event directly benefit Parkinson's-focused programming at the YMCA of the High Country, helping participants in our Mitchell and Avery communities stay active, build meaningful connections, and enhance their overall quality of life through movement-based wellness initiatives.

Thanks to the energy, enthusiasm, and generosity of 34 dedicated players, this year's tournament raised over \$5,000 in support of these life-changing programs. The event not only provided critical funding, but also helped raise awareness and strengthen the sense of community around those served. Some of our Moving Mountains with Parkinson's program participants even competed in the tournament (see pictured)!

We want to say a heartfelt thank you to the sponsors and donors whose support made this event possible. Their investment made a lasting difference in the lives of participants and the continued success of these programs.



Women on Weights Successfully Concludes

Our most recent Women on Weights session



Join Our Team

Love being part of the Y community? Join our team!

successfully came to a close this past month. One of our staff members, April Dugger, participated. This is what she had to say about her experience:

"Women on weights has grown not only my physical strength but also my ability to feel more confident in working out and trying new things. I have gone from my heaviest weight to lift being under 10 pounds to it being my lightest weight I use. Ann Marie has also shown me different exercises to help correct A condition that I have had for most of my life that is A painful inconvenience that hinders me day to day that is now improving. I also feel more confident in doing exercise around others and even asking for help or input to get the most out of what I do. Not only was the class fun but the experience I had with Ann Marie and other participants is something I will never forget."

We're hiring for several roles this season, including lifeguards, summer camp counselors, Child Watch staff, early learning assistants, athletics and membership associates, and wellness coaches. If you're looking for meaningful work in a place that strengthens community every day, we'd love to talk with you.

For a full list of Job Openings, visit the link below or contact Edie Young at ediey@ymcaavery.org for more information

[Join Our Team](#)



Take the Pledge to Put Phones Down When Around the Water this Summer

It seems like such a quick moment to respond to a text, answer a work email or make a quick grocery list, but quick actions can quickly become major distractions. And distractions around the water can have major consequences. In fact, 88% of child drownings occur with at least one adult present.

YMCA of the USA has launched a water safety campaign—Phones Down, Eyes Up™—in order to draw attention to this safety issue and encourage parents and caregivers to put phones and tablets away when monitoring children in and around the water. The YMCA is asking families to take a water safety pledge, indicating you will put away your phones when around the water this summer. Families who take the pledge will also have access to educational tools, including a reminder wallpaper for their phones, monthly newsletters with water safety tips, and more!

To take the pledge, or for more information on this nationwide initiative, see the link below.

[Phones Down, Eyes Up Campaign](#)

Raise Your Voice for the YMCA!

This spring, the YMCA is participating in a nationwide Advocate Recruitment Campaign to build a stronger network of community voices. By joining as a YMCA Advocate, you'll receive timely updates about issues affecting our Y, our families, and our community. When key decisions arise, Advocates receive Action Alerts—simple, official requests to contact policymakers. Each alert provides clear instructions and easy tools, like pre-written messages or call scripts, so you can take action in seconds. Your information is always secure and used only for Y advocacy; it is never shared or sold.

Join our YMCA Advocacy Network at the following link:

[Advocacy Network Sign-Up](#)

Together, we can make sure policymakers understand the critical role the Y plays in our community.

Mark Your Calendars



Healthy Kids Day—Tomorrow, May 2!

Let's celebrate sunshine, smiles, and stronger families! Head to Healthy Kids Day® at the Williams YMCA of Avery County for an afternoon packed with creative play, fitness fun, and simple tips to keep your kids moving and motivated all summer long.

Bring your friends, bring your neighbors... everyone's invited! Join us May 2, 2026 from 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. at the Blackburn Athletic Facility. Free and open to the public.

What to Expect:

- Community Resource Vendors
- Block Fest
- Tie-Dye
- Face Painting
- Bounce Houses
- Magician
- Food Trucks

Additionally, join us for a FREE "Try the Y" Open House in our main facility during Healthy Kids Day!

Enjoy a fun day exploring everything we have to offer, and don't miss a special showcase featuring artwork from talented local middle school students.

For more information on the event, visit our website below.

[Healthy Kids Day Info](#)

Community Hikes Returning

Our community hikes are officially back and will take place every 4th Wednesday of the month! These hikes are a great way to stay active, connect with others, and enjoy the natural beauty of our area while spending time with others in your community.

To ensure the best experience for everyone, hike locations will be announced one week in advance, allowing time to evaluate weather conditions and choose the safest, most enjoyable trail.

If you're ever unsure whether a hike will take place due to weather, we encourage you to call the facility at 828-737-5500 for the latest updates. For more information on how to get involved with community hikes, email Sheila Bauer below.

[Email Sheila](#)



Find Your Fun. Find Your Y. Join us for Summer Sport Clinics!

The YMCA is excited to offer 2026 Summer Sport Clinics for youth ages 4–13, designed to help kids stay active, build skills, and have fun in a supportive environment.

Two sessions are available:

Session 1: June 1 – June 26

Session 2: July 6 – July 31

Clinics are held throughout the week, giving participants the chance to explore a variety of sports:

Mondays: Pickleball

Tuesdays: Volleyball

Wednesdays: Basketball

Thursdays: Flag Football

Fridays: Track

TIMES

Ages 4–7: 4:00 PM – 4:45 PM

Ages 8–13: 4:45 PM – 5:30 PM

PRICING

Members:

1 Sport – \$25

3 Sports – \$60

5 Sports – \$100

Non-Members:

1 Sport – \$40

3 Sports – \$100

5 Sports – \$160

To register or learn more, contact Faith Boyette below.

[Email Faith](#)



Upcoming Healthy Living Programs

LIVESTRONG® at the YMCA

Begins **June 1**. Registration is open for a limited time—sign up within the first couple of weeks to secure your spot. To register, email Chris Kennedy.

[Email Chris](#)

Pedaling for Parkinson's

A new 8-week session will start **May 4**. This program will meet 3 times a week on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Email Deana Acklin for more information or to register!

[Email Deana](#)

Blood Pressure Self Monitoring Program (BPSM)

Starting new session May 4th. This program is at no cost to participants, and will have office hours on Mondays from 8:00 AM-8:30 AM and 9:30 AM-10:00 AM. Email Abby for more information or to register.

abbigailb@ymcaavery.org

[Email Abby](#)

EnhanceFitness

Started on **April 27**, but registration is still open! Reach out to Chris Kennedy if you are interested in joining the fun. chris@ymcaavery.org

[Email Chris](#)



Tri the Y Triathlon Challenge!

This May, mix up your workout routine by completing the Wellness Triathlon Challenge! First, pick from two distances—Super Sprint or Olympic. Then swim, bike, and run (or walk!) your way to completing the challenge. You can complete all three disciplines in one day, or complete each one in three separate sessions.

Finisher prizes are available, and you will also have an opportunity to see if you can "beat the staff" on our leaderboards!

Check out the flyers on the wellness floor for more information, or speak to any wellness or membership staff.



National Senior Health and Fitness Day at the Y!

Join us for National Senior Health and Fitness Day on May 20, 2026 from 9:00 AM-12:00 PM in our Blackburn Athletics Facility.

This annual event promotes the importance of physical activity and wellness for older adults in our community. If you are interested in more information on this event, or volunteering, email Sheila Bauer below.

[Email Sheila](#)



Join us Bi-Weekly for BINGO!

Join us for Bingo at the Y, held every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM! This fun and social gathering is a great way to connect with others, enjoy some friendly competition, and add a little excitement to your day.

All participants must register in advance at the Membership Desk, so be sure to reserve your spot. We look forward to seeing you there!



Summer Camp Starting June 8—Registration Open Online NOW!

Get your child plugged into the Y this Summer!

Summer Camp is a full-day program for rising 1st-5th graders that provides a safe, engaging environment while school is out. Activities may include swimming, outdoor games, arts and crafts, STEM projects, and field trips. Our team creates a fun, supportive space where kids can learn, grow, and make lasting friendships.

Camp will be held from 7:30 AM-5:30 PM Monday-Friday from June 8-July 30. This program is offered at no cost.






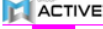
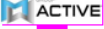













Registration is NOW OPEN—sign up at the link below. For questions, email Avery Youth Development Director, Skyler Sudhoff, at skylerr@ymcaavery.org.

Summer Camp Registration

May Schedules

May Group Exercise Schedule

May GROUP FITNESS

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
5:30 am		 BODYPUMP Tyler		 BODYPUMP Eva		Pop-up Saturday Classes ☺
7:00am 	Hatha Yoga Sarah		Hatha Yoga Sarah		Hatha Yoga Sarah	Pop-Up Spin and Kettlebells <u>Saturday May 2nd 9:00am</u> Vanessa
7:30am		Core with Sheila		Core with Sheila		
8:30am	Stretch, Tone Balance-Sheila Blackburn GYM B	 ACTIVE Sheila	Stretch, Tone, Balance-Sheila Blackburn GYM B	 ACTIVE Eddie	Stretch, Tone & Balance – Sheila Blackburn GYM B	POP-UP CHAIR YOGA VANESSA EVERY 3 RD SATURDAY May 16th 10:00AM
9:00 am	Water Fit Genevieve		Water Fit Genevieve	Think of all the beauty left around you and be Happy	Water Fit Genevieve	
9:45am	 DDPY Lisa	Alignment Yoga Carol Ann	Yoga Sculpt Chris	Flow Yoga Jocelyn	 DDPY Lisa	
11:00 am		Qigong/Tai Chi Carol Ann		Qigong Tai Chi Carol Ann	Dance Fit Kim 🇺🇸❤️	🇺🇸 🇯🇵 🇨🇰 🇰🇷❤️
12:00 pm	 BODYPUMP Bonnie	 BODYATTACK Bonnie	 BODYPUMP Teresa	HITT FIT & Core Ann Marie	 BODYPUMP Kathleen	
2:00pm	Water Fit Lucy		Water Fit Lucy		Water Fit Lucy	
5:30pm		Spin Fusion Vanessa		Spin Fusion Vanessa		
5:30pm	 ACTIVE Nyoka	Barre Shannon Water Fit(Lucy)	 DDPY Lisa	 ACTIVE Sheila Water Fit(Lucy)		

To find an up-close view of the calendar, and for descriptions of each class, click below.

Group Exercise Schedule

May Aquatics Schedule

May Aquatics Schedule						
	Lap lane 1	Lap lane 2	Lap lane 3	Lap lane 4	Lap lane 5	Kid Area
7:00 AM	First come first serve/Open swim	First come first serve/Open swim	First come first serve/Open swim	First come first serve/Open swim	First come first serve/Open swim	OPEN SWIM
8:00 AM				Reserved for Water fit Monday, Wednesday, Friday 8a-10a	Reserved for Water fit Monday, Wednesday, Friday 8a-10a	
9:00 AM				CLOSED WEDNESDAYS 11-1 FOR CLEANING		
10:00 AM				CLOSED WEDNESDAYS 11-1 FOR CLEANING		
11:00 AM	CLOSED WEDNESDAYS 11-1 FOR CLEANING		Reserved for Aquatics Programs			
12:00 PM	CLOSED WEDNESDAYS 11-1 FOR CLEANING		Reserved for Aquatics Programs			
1:00 PM	Water Fit Monday, Wednesday, Friday 2:00-3:00		Reserved for Aquatics Programs			
2:00 PM	Water Fit Tuesday & Thursdays 5:30-6:30		Reserved for Aquatics Programs			
3:00 PM	Open swim		Reserved for Aquatics Programs			
4:00 PM	Open swim		Reserved for Aquatics Programs			
5:00 PM	Open swim		Reserved for Aquatics Programs			
6:00 PM	Open swim		Reserved for Aquatics Programs			
7:00 PM	Open swim		Reserved for Aquatics Programs			
8:00 PM	Closed					

To find an up-close view of the calendar, and for descriptions of each class, click below.

[Aquatics Schedule](#)

Giving Back

Do you want to be part of the Y movement and give back to the Avery County community? There are a variety of ways you can get involved with the Williams YMCA of Avery County.

At the Williams YMCA of Avery County everyday we see lives changed—drowning prevention programs, outreach services addressing social isolation and food insecurity, afterschool 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. None of this happens without you.

If the Y has made a difference in your life, we invite you to give today!

Your support—big or small—creates opportunities, builds community, and helps every person learn, grow, and thrive.

[DONATE](#)

Looking for other ways to give back to the Y? Give the gift of your time and skills in programs that change the lives of children, teens, adults, families, and seniors.

VOLUNTEER



Connect with us on:



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