



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## #YCON OF THE MONTH

### One Step at a Time: Lisa's Comeback Story

At the A.M.Y. Wellness Foundation YMCA of Mitchell County, lives are being changed every day. Although you may pass various people in the facility dropping their kids off at the CDC, swimming laps in the pool, or getting in a lift on the Wellness Floor, you may not realize that each person has a story, a motivation, and a goal for their membership at the Y. One particular story is sure to encourage you—this is the story of Lisa Tucci-Caselli, a faithful visitor to our aquatics space.



Lisa was born in Sarasota, Florida, in 1967, but moved to Macon County, NC at the age of 10. Here, she quickly made a name for herself through her athletic success. She was the first person in her high school's history to receive a full scholarship to play collegiate athletics. She attended Gardner-Webb University, where she was a standout on the basketball court and the softball field. However, what she shared most proudly was her 3.56 GPA and her degree in Criminal Justice.

Out of college, she began a professional career rooted in service, but everything changed when she suffered a traumatic injury that affected her ability to walk. She bravely shared that this injury marked the start of a long battle with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which led to complications like over-medicating and depression. During some of her lowest points, she turned to writing—having even completed a full poetry book titled "Broken Chains." Most significantly, though, she turned to her faith, sharing, "God was there, shining in the darkness," even as her journey with walking still had a long way to go.

After spending nearly three years in the hospital and being told she would never walk again, Lisa reflected that she had "given up on life." However, things began to change when she was sent to Smoky Ridge Health & Rehabilitation Center in Burnsville, NC, where she has resided for the last year and a half. Since then, she has grown physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Every week, a preacher from Pleasant Valley Baptist Church would visit Smoky Ridge. Eventually, Lisa asked if she could join them at church on Sundays—and the answer was yes. This brought her even closer to God in a season she needed Him most, and it also gave her hope for other ways she could care for herself. If she could go to church on Sundays, she figured she could make her way to the new YMCA to work out in the pool.

Now, multiple days a week, she treads water with a 10-pound brick and swims laps. The first time she walked into the Y, she needed a walker for assistance but since starting this routine, she needs little to no help getting around.

Lisa boasts that "God, Smoky Ridge, Pleasant Valley, and the YMCA have saved my life." Her next goal is to bring along other patients and friends with her to continue their health journeys. Lisa is an inspiration to everyone around us, and her story should remind us all that with determination, faith, and the right resources, anything is possible. We at the Y are so grateful to be a part of her miracle.

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**A Letter from our Executive Director**

As we step into May, I want to take a moment to recognize the incredible energy and engagement we've seen throughout our Y this spring. From busy fitness floors to full aquatics schedules and growing youth programs, it's clear that our community is showing up—for their health, for each other, and for something bigger.

Spring Break was a great example of that momentum. With more than 1,900 visits in a single week, our facility was filled with activity, connection, and purpose. None of that happens without our dedicated staff, who continue to go above and beyond to create a welcoming and positive experience for every member who walks through our doors.

You may also notice some new faces throughout the facility. We've recently welcomed new team members at both the membership desk and the wellness desk. When you get a chance, please take a moment to introduce yourself and welcome them to our community Y. We're excited to have them as part of our team.

We were also excited to be part of something truly special this season—the return of the Special Olympics to Mitchell County after ten years. This is more than just an event; it's a celebration of determination, inclusion, and community spirit. Many of our staff and members stepped up to support and cheer on the athletes, and we couldn't have been more proud to be involved.

As we look ahead, May is a time to stay consistent and keep building on the progress you've made. Whether you're just getting started or continuing your wellness journey, remember that every visit, every workout, and every connection matters.

Thank you for being part of our Y. Together!

-Bill Hoag, Branch Executive Director

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## What's Happening



### 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

### Join Our Team!

Love being part of the Y community? Take the next step and become part of something bigger, join our team! We're eager to hire for variety 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

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.

at [ediey@ymcaavery.org](mailto:ediey@ymcaavery.org) for more information

[Join Our Team](#)



### **EnhanceFitness Celebrates Strong First Session & Program Growth**

We are proud to announce the successful completion of our first EnhanceFitness session this April. Despite challenges with weather disruptions and seasonal illness, the program fostered meaningful connections and consistent progress among participants—highlighting the strength and resilience of this group.

One participant shared an encouraging health update following her annual visit with her medical provider. She reported a decrease in her blood pressure significant enough to discontinue her medication, with her provider attributing this improvement in part to her participation in EnhanceFitness. Stories like this underscore the life-changing impact of evidence-based wellness programs.

April also marked an exciting milestone with the launch of the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program at our Mitchell location for the first time. This highly anticipated program, developed in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, supports individuals at risk for type 2 diabetes in making sustainable, healthy lifestyle changes. After a long wait, we were thrilled to officially begin serving participants through this impactful initiative.

Looking ahead, the next EnhanceFitness

### **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](#)

session will begin on May 4 and run through August 21, 2026. While this upcoming session is already at full capacity, those interested in participating in the third and final session this year, planned for September–December 2026, are encouraged to contact Jessica Thomas via email below to be added to the interest list.

[Email Jessica](#)



**ONE VOICE,  
BIG IMPACT**

### **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.

### **Group Exercise Schedule Updates**

The Group Exercise schedule saw a few changes during the month of April. *Groove and Gain* (Tuesdays and Thursdays at 10:00 AM) and *Strength Interval Training* (Fridays at 12:00 PM) have concluded.

We extend our sincere appreciation to Kim and Joe for their time, energy, and passion in leading these classes. Their dedication created a welcoming, positive, and motivating environment for members, guests, and staff alike. Their impact has been truly felt across the Y community, and we are grateful for the enthusiasm and commitment they brought to each session.

To learn what group exercise classes will be available this month, check out the May calendar linked under "May Schedules."



### **Middle School Art Contest Winner: Malachi Williams**

This past month, middle school students throughout Mitchell County were challenged to create a piece of art representing one of our YMCA Areas of Impact: For Youth Development, For Healthy Living, or For Social Responsibility. Mitchell County's winner is Malachi Williams, a 6th grader at Mountain Christian Academy!

Check out his painting above, which highlights both "For Youth Development" and "For Healthy Living" by representing our Youth Fit program. It will be hanging in our lobby for the next couple of weeks, so be sure to stop by and see it. Congratulations, Malachi!

## **Mark Your Calendars**



**Upcoming Aquatics Programming**

  
**HONOR  
COMMITMENT  
COMMUNITY**  
"MURPH ALL MONTH"  
May Wellness Challenge

**May Wellness Challenge: MURPH**

## **Aqua Arthritis Healthy Living Program – Beginning May 4**

This new Healthy Living Program is designed to support joint health through low-impact movement in a supportive aquatic environment. Participants will work on improving flexibility, strength, and range of motion while reducing stress on the joints—making it an excellent option for those managing arthritis or seeking a gentle, effective workout. *Please expect lane closures in our lap pool during Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00 AM-11:00 AM until July 22.*

## **Monday Evening Water Aerobics with Delaney – Beginning May 18**

A new Monday session of Water Aerobics will launch on May 18 at 6:00 PM, led by Delaney. This class will follow the same format and structure as the current Wednesday evening program, offering another opportunity for participants to enjoy a fun, low-impact, full-body workout in the water. *Please expect lane closures during this time.*



## **Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring Moving Changing Time/Locations**

BPSM is an evidence-based program that features personalized support from a Healthy Heart Ambassador to develop the habit of monitoring blood pressure. Participants learn how to monitor their own blood pressure with proper techniques, and how to identify trends and patterns in readings.

**This drop-in program will now be held on Wednesday's from 9:00 AM-9:45 AM in group exercise, and from 10:00 AM-10:30 AM in the seating area outside of Aquatics.**

For more information, reach out to our Community Health Worker and Healthy Heart Ambassador, Anabel Zayas, below.

This workout honors Lt. Michael P. Murphy and is in remembrance of those who gave everything in service.

Participants are allowed to choose one of two versions of the workout:

### **1. RX'd Version (The Hero Standard):**

Consists of wearing a 20lb weighted vest (men), or a 14lb weighted vest (women), while completing a 1 mile run, 100 pull-ups, 200 push-ups, 300 air squats, and another 1 mile run.

### **2. Unweighted Version:**

Consists of a 1 mile run, 100 pull-ups (assisted/ ring rows allowed), 200 push-ups (modify as needed), 300 air squats, and another 1 mile run.

The goal is simple: give it your best effort and finish with the fastest time possible. You may complete a full Murph or break it into partitioned sets, but be sure to report your time to the Wellness Desk! Top finishers will get specially recognized on Memorial Day.



## **Summer Camp Starting June 15— 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-Thursday from June 15-July 23 at Harris Middle School. This program is offered at no cost.

Registration is NOW OPEN—sign up at the link below. For questions, email Mitchell Youth

Email Anabel

Development Director, Burton Blankenship,  
at [burtonb@ymcamitchell.org](mailto:burtonb@ymcamitchell.org).

Summer Camp Registration

# May Schedules

## May Group Exercise Schedule

MAY 2026 GROUP EXERCISE CLASS OFFERINGS AND PROGRAM DETAILS										
Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday				
7:00 AM										
7:30 AM		Sunrise Yoga (Belinda) - Room 109								
8:00 AM										
8:30 AM										
9:00 AM	Move & Tone (Carolyn) - Room 109	Refit (Morgan) - Room 108 *No Class 5/26	Water Aerobics - Pool	Move & Tone (Carolyn) - Room 109	Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring - Pool Seating Area	Refit (Morgan) - Room 108 *No Class 5/28	Water Aerobics - Pool	Move & Tone (Carolyn) - Room 109	Refit (Morgan) - Room 108 *No Class 5/23	
10:00 AM	Enhance Fitness - Room 108 *Registration Closed	Aqua Arthritis - Pool *Registration Closed		Enhance Fitness - Room 108 *Registration Closed	Aqua Arthritis - Pool *Registration Closed	All Levels Yoga (Belinda) - Room 109		Enhance Fitness - Room 108 *Registration Closed		
10:30 AM										
11:00 AM	Vinyasa Yoga (Maria) - Room 109	Delay the Disease - Room 108 *By Registration Only		Chair Yoga (Nichole) Room 109 *No Class 5/20		Delay the Disease - Room 108 *By Registration Only				
11:30 AM										
12:00 PM		Mat Pilates (Maureen) - Room 109				PIYO (Whitney) - Room 108 *No Class 5/21 & 5/28				
12:30 PM										
1:00 PM	Moving for Better Balance - Room 108 - *Registration Closed			Moving for Better Balance - Room 108 - *Registration Closed						
1:30 PM										
2:00 PM										
2:30 PM				Prevent T2/DPP - Room 108 *Registration Closed						
3:00 PM										
3:30 PM										
4:00 PM		Barre (Dalila) - Room 108				Barre (Dalila) - Room 108				
4:30 PM				Yoga Sculpt (Maria) - Room 108						
5:00 PM										
5:30 PM										
6:00 PM	Zumba (Sarah) - Room 108	All Levels Yoga (Belinda) - Room 109		Water Aerobics - Pool		Zumba (Sarah) - Room 108				
6:30 PM										

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR MOSSA GROUP BLAST POP-UPS

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

Group Exercise Schedule

May Aquatics Schedule

**POOL HOURS**

Monday through Friday - 7:00 AM until 7:00 PM  
 Saturday - 8:00 AM until 3:30 PM



MAY 2026 AQUATICS CLASS OFFERINGS AND PROGRAM DETAILS								
	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
			Private Swim Lessons Registration Required 30 minute classes throughout the day		Private Swim Lessons Registration Required 30 minute classes throughout the day			
5:00 AM	CLOSED	CLOSED					CLOSED	
5:30 AM		CLOSED						
6:00 AM		CLOSED						
6:30 AM		CLOSED						
7:00 AM		CLOSED						
7:30 AM		CLOSED						
8:00 AM		Adult Swim Group Registration Required		Adult Swim Group Registration Required		Adult Swim Group Registration Required		
8:30 AM								
9:00 AM				Water Aerobics		Water Aerobics		
9:30 AM								
10:00 AM								
10:30 AM		Aqua Arthritis - Class Full - Waitlist Open		Aqua Arthritis - Class Full - Waitlist Open				
11:00 AM								
11:30 AM								
12:00 PM					Potential Pool Party			
12:30 PM								
1:00 PM								
1:30 PM								
2:00 PM								
2:30 PM					Potential Pool Party			
3:00 PM								
3:30 PM								
3:45 PM								
4:00 PM					Group Swim Lessons Beginner 1st and 3rd Thursdays 3:45 - 4:30 Registration Required			
4:30 PM					Group Swim Lessons Intermediate 1st and 3rd Thursdays 4:30 - 5:15 Registration Required			
5:00 PM								
5:15 PM								
5:30 PM								
6:00 PM	Water Aerobics Class (starts May 18th)		Water Aerobics Class					
6:30 PM								
7:00 PM								
8:00 PM	CLOSED		Kayak Roll Session - 1st Tuesday only		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 Mitchell County community? There are a variety of ways you can get involved with the A.M.Y. Wellness Foundation YMCA of Mitchell County!

At the A.M.Y. Wellness Foundation YMCA of Mitchell 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.

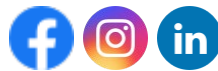


VOLUNTEER



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Connect with us on:



A.M.Y. Wellness Foundation YMCA of Mitchell County | 97 Pinebridge Ave, Spruce Pine, NC  
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