



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

IMPACTING LIVES FOR A LIFETIME

YMCA BLUE RIDGE ASSEMBLY OVERVIEW OF CASE FOR SUPPORT

best summer
of my life.

opened my eyes
to what it really
means to be a
Christian.

life changing
experience
and it bettered
me physically,
mentally and
most of all
spiritually.

God's greatness and
beauty surrounding
me in the trees and
the mountains.

tune out the
noise the world
usually drowns
me with and hear
God's voice.

taught me I
am a leader.

amazing and safe
place that will
change your life.

greatest
place on
Earth.

I can inspire
confidence in
others.

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History

YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly was established in 1906 by Dr. Willis Duke Weatherford Sr., as a Christian conference and training center. It was added to the National Registry of Historic Sites in 1979. Located in the majestic mountains of Western North Carolina, not far from the city of Asheville, it has been widely known throughout the YMCA and non-profit movement for over 100 years as a premier conference center. Since the beginning, the Assembly has sought to be the vehicle in which life-changing experiences positively impact the spiritual, mental and physical development of youth, young adults and families.



Vision and Purpose

Vision: YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly will be the premier destination for developing, empowering and inspiring values-based leaders to strengthen the foundations of their community.

Purpose: To provide a platform, within a majestic environment, where lives are positively impacted for a lifetime.

Implementation of the Vision and Purpose

Blue Ridge works to strengthen the foundations of communities by providing opportunities for educational and religious instruction. YMCAs, schools, churches, governmental and community development organizations constitute the bulk of our guests, along with youth character-building agencies, camp groups and human service organizations. The Assembly provides a serene, picturesque and inspirational setting for these groups to accomplish their work. And it provides programming that promotes leadership, trust, team-building, self-discovery, health and physical education, family life and environmental conservation. In 2013, Blue Ridge served 425 groups and more than 28,000 individuals, almost half of whom were youth.



The other portion of the Assembly's work centers on strengthening families through intergenerational activities. The programs we provide unite family members through quality time together, promote healthy lifestyles and encourage multi-generational bonding experiences. We know that play is fundamental to a child's healthy development; we also know that playing and learning together are fundamental to building strong families.

The Environment

The environment itself is a crucial element of the experience of YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly. The pristine mountain location has inspired hundreds of YMCA professionals during their career development programs and thousands of teens attending the annual Conference on National Affairs, Leaders' School, Fellowship of Christian Athletes conferences and more. Lives have been changed by quality programs and dedicated leaders. And the majestic environment itself has enhanced the transformative effect of the programming, inspiring deep reflection and renewed commitment to faith and careers.



The Board and staff of YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly understand the sacred trust they bear to continue to use the nearly 1,200 acres of the Assembly grounds as the glue that holds together the truly unique qualities of the conference center. Creation care continues to be embraced at Blue Ridge Assembly, from utilizing lumber through forest management and providing room for green spaces on the grounds to more recent implementations of a gardening project which supplies food for our guests and a recycling program. The capital "refresh" proposed for Blue Ridge Assembly will honor these values through the use of appropriate design, materials and furnishings that are in harmony with our environmental concerns.

The Need

Blue Ridge Assembly has beautiful and historic buildings. Eureka Hall is 103 years old, and some days it seems that old. Blue Ridge Center, built in 1970, also is showing its age. These facilities are in need of a "refresh." They are, indeed, the tools necessary to bring people of all ages to YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly, tools that facilitate their mountaintop experiences. Blue Ridge is a true learning laboratory experience for all those who participate in our programs and are encouraged to embrace a respect and caring for our mountain. The "refresh" will ensure the continuation of the Assembly as an important teaching tool for environmental responsibility as well as a spiritual place to seek personal understanding and growth.



Major upgrades of our facilities will catapult YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly to a level that will enable us to successfully serve a growing conference customer base and schedule and provide a greatly enhanced customer experience.

The Project is Three-Fold.

It is important and essential to our continued success.

Eureka Hall Guest Rooms

Eureka Hall is the emotional centerpiece of Blue Ridge. Sitting in a green rocking chair overlooking the magnificent Black Mountains has changed lives. If you have had this experience of nature, then you understand the comment, "I just want to sit on the porch at Eureka Hall!" We want teens to have that experience during more than just the shrinking summer season.

It is nearly impossible to describe the impact of Eureka Hall. This 55,000 square-foot historic edifice, constructed from 1909 to 1912, consists of four stories with an octastyle portico rising its full height. Eureka Hall is the epicenter of the Assembly's summer conferences, with 146 sleeping rooms accommodating nearly 400 youth and adults. In addition to its vast 4,400 square-foot lobby, it holds summer offices and several meeting spaces. Ask any summer guest his or her favorite spot at Blue Ridge, and the answer will surely include Eureka Hall, either the majesty of the building itself or its inspiring view of the Black Mountains. But it won't be the rooms.

Because Eureka Hall is neither heated nor air-conditioned, it currently is strictly a seasonal facility. It accommodates youth conferences only eight weeks a year. Adding heating and air-conditioning to 146 sleeping rooms will expand Eureka Hall's usability by an additional six months of the year, expanding the Assembly's capacity by an anticipated 3,600 bed nights.

In past years, groups and individuals have been turned away due to lack of adequate facilities during the spring and fall months that are so beautiful on the mountain. By creating this additional capacity, we will expand our opportunity to change lives. We will also be able to add revenue to the budget. We expect to experience \$300,000 of additional revenue by making this improvement to one of our favorite youth facilities.

Blue Ridge Center Guest Rooms

Blue Ridge Center is the lodging headquarters for the Assembly. Built in 1970, it is a series of hotel-like rooms and can accommodate a maximum of 200 guests. It was a top-notch facility when it was constructed, and it met a significant housing need for adults attending conferences at Blue Ridge. Although minor soft renovations have been done over the years, no major remodels of the guest rooms have occurred since construction.

The Blue Ridge Center portion of the Assembly's business is critical to financial sustainability. Renovating the rooms at Blue Ridge Center will enable us to maintain our current level of business as well as attract new business. While the summer conferences are often referred to as the mission component of our work, Blue Ridge Center is critical to our financial success.

This project consists of renovating all of the 50 guest rooms in Blue Ridge Center. A nationally recognized expert in YMCA construction has assisted in the design and materials choices for the project. This remodel will not involve the installation of TVs, because we continue to be committed to the concept that Blue Ridge is and should be an experience away from the everyday world, an experience of nature.

If we are going to continue to attract major groups to YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly, we need a quality place for adults to stay while they are serving the young people on the mountain. To preserve our financial model, we need to renovate the guest rooms in Blue Ridge Center. Once this project is completed, we expect to generate \$150,000 in additional business annually.

Blue Ridge Center Entry and Lobby

When you approach YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly, you experience the majesty of nature. The single-lane drive up the mountain, enclosed by the profusion of trees and greenery, gives you a taste of what you are about to experience in being at one with the mountain. You are ready to sit in a green rocking chair and allow the natural environment to seep into your being.



The view upon arrival at the conference center is not so spectacular. There is nothing about a concrete slab and a parking lot that projects that same feel. When Blue Ridge Center was constructed in 1970, funds were not available to construct a grand entry that replicated the awesomeness of the porch on Eureka Hall or the view from just about every cottage on the grounds. Today's concrete slab without even canopy coverage from rain fails to meet the need for accessibility and convenience, and it certainly fails to meet the desire for beauty and serenity. It does not provide the first impression of Blue Ridge that we want people to have.

The Blue Ridge Center lobby, the center point and hub of the conference center, is the second important entry point. Every guest enters the lobby to check in. The lobby is out of date and fails to project the impression of positive expectation we want our Blue Ridge Assembly guests to have.

We all appreciate the power of first impressions, and we want to change the statement we are making. We believe we have a superior product: the platform for development of character and enhancement of faith-based values that enable young people to achieve their God-given potential. We want our guests to have a similarly positive reaction to our facilities. We want to make a statement with our entry point that is consistent with our product.

Thus, this part of the three-fold project consists of two components: 1) building an inviting, accessible, protected canopy entry for the front of Blue Ridge Center, and 2) renovating the Blue Ridge Center lobby.

Project Costs

We have engaged a number of architects and construction personnel in estimating the costs of these projects. We recognize that construction projects on the mountain involve circumstances that result in costs that are higher than those of flat-terrain projects. Based on our discovery information, we estimate the cost for all of these projects to be approximately \$3.5 million.

Eureka Hall Guest Rooms	\$ 1,300,000
Blue Ridge Center Guest Rooms	1,700,000
Blue Ridge Center Lobby and Entry	<u>500,000</u>
Total	\$3,500,000

Conclusion

YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly needs your help. We want to continue to have a positive impact on the lives of young people by providing a transformational experience in this majestic setting. While we don't want to change the atmosphere where young people can contemplate life and make commitments to serve others and their community, we DO want to improve the facilities. The proposed capital campaign is, at its heart, an affirmation of the core values of honesty, respect, caring and responsibility within our society and world, an affirmation of the values that instill the deepest commitment to our natural resources.

We promise to continue to change lives if you will promise to contribute the funds necessary to improve our facilities. Together, we can fulfill the mission of YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly to facilitate transformational changes in the lives of young people.

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BlueRidgeAssembly.org

YMCA BLUE RIDGE ASSEMBLY

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