



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**“Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails.”
Proverbs 19:21**

I had a plan. Lots of plans. Plans with timelines, strategies and targets.

In the fall newsletter, we talked about the *through* – walking through **isolation pursuing connection**, through **anxiety seeking peace**, through **struggle searching for contentment** OR through **sadness towards joy**. The *through* can be difficult but can lead to so much **growth and hope**. I have experienced the truth of that these last 150 days - the *through, the hope and the learning to let go*.

YMCA Blue Ridge had a strong strategic plan focused on exponential growth and impact; a master site plan; and an operational and programmatic growth plan. We were doubling down on **youth development** by deepening and strengthening our work with families – strengthen the family, strengthen the child. To accomplish this important work, we were focused on the campus experience - revitalization, restoration and new construction to be relevant for today’s families.

And then came Hurricane Helene.

Since September 2024, we have been in survival mode with a focus on stabilizing and recovering. The **shocking, significant damage needed immediate action** if we were going to save YMCA Blue Ridge, a place which has been home to so many for over 100 years! And now we find ourselves back in the planning stages, figuring out which of the old plans still apply and which ones to let go.

This journey has been like riding a rollercoaster, with highs and lows, smiles and tears, excitement and nausea. In my interviews, I want you to see the gratitude and hope come through. I stay calm and hopeful by focusing on two things. First, a quote from Lucille Ball – “*One of the things I learned the hard way was that it doesn’t pay to get discouraged.*” The second, however, is most important – **a strong faith foundation** – I know WHOSE I am and WHO is in control; Blue Ridge is HIS place. I’ve been given the honor of **stewarding and serving** YMCA Blue Ridge, but His plan prevails. It is humbling to let go.

On a recent call, a YMCA colleague I admire was giving the opening devotion, and she referenced that **YMCA Blue Ridge is a “thin place”. A place or experience where the boundary between heaven and earth is thin**. I was stunned because it was the second time in two days that I heard the term “thin place.” She is so remarkably accurate! YMCA Blue Ridge IS a thin place; this campus offers space for people to hear, feel and see God’s love. This place is beloved and blessed.

For this reason, we look to the future with hope and a revised vision. **Who we are and what we do hasn’t changed** and we are still committed to our strategic plan focusing on youth development, strengthening families and transformational hospitality. Our recent capital initiative focused on building contemporary spaces for families and small groups will take more time to implement than planned; we will return to it in due time. But for now, we have refocused our priorities:

- **Restore Blue Ridge Center and Weatherford Hall**
- **Repair critical infrastructure – roads, bridges and retaining walls**
- **Implement a phased reopening for summer 2025**

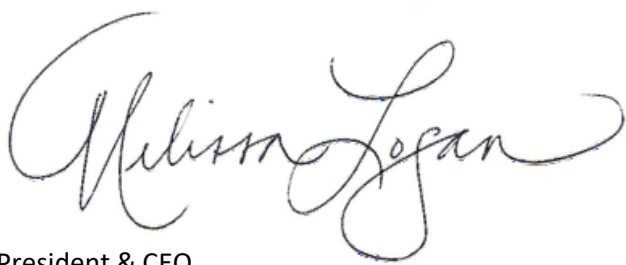
We are embracing the opportunity to redesign our master site plan. This redesign was necessary in part because of some of the damage from Helene – losing the pool and Old Gym; changing landscape from landslides and debris flow; and reconstructing bridges, culverts and damaged roads. While we mourn those losses, I am learning to **embrace new possibilities and a new vision for campus**.

I'll hold these plans in an open hand. We still have a lot of work to do and funds to raise. I'm **thankful to all our donors** who gave generously to stabilize and save us. Know that you gave us hope for a bright future. I'm thankful to all of you who have already invested in our future plans. As we continue leaning in and moving forward, here's what we need:

- 1) **Pray.** We want to follow God's plan for YMCA Blue Ridge so please pray He will grant us wisdom in our decisions and discernment over our finances.
- 2) **Encourage.** You have been so encouraging and supportive and we'll need that to continue. Keep watching the videos, reading our posts, sharing our story and your story!
- 3) **Give.** We humbly ask that you continue to support us; we need donations of all amounts – monthly gifts, stocks, one-time gifts, qualified charitable distributions. You are giving towards our future!

Together, we can celebrate **four generations of impact**. Now, we have an opportunity to partner for the next generation of impact. You are the reason and way we do this important work. It's because of your support. **Thank you for your partnership and for investing in YMCA Blue Ridge**. For this and so much more, we are most grateful.

With a hopeful and grateful heart,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa Logan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

President & CEO

