YMCA BLUE RIDGE STAFF ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

BEYOND THE RIDGE

OCTOBER 2026 ISSUE #1

StaffAlumni@yblueridge.org

facebook@YBRA.SAA



REMEMBER WHEN

Can you remember your very first staff training? You were surrounded by new lifelong friends from all around the world!

Read All About It!

Welcome to the first issue of the Blue Ridge Staff Alumni newsletter, Beyond the Ridge.

The quarterly newsletter is just one way we can stay connected to the Assembly and to each other. We want you to be part of the process.

Alumni Database:

Our alumni database is being updated! If you're unsure if you're on it or your information is current scan the QR code or email (name, name you went by at Blue Ridge, physical address with city/state/zip, email, phone and years on staff).

Alumni Photos:

Send your archived photos of your summer(s) on staff, with year and people identified to StaffAlumni@yblueridge.org.

Alumni Spotlight:

In each issue of Beyond the Ridge, we'll highlight an alum. Use the QR Code to submit a form or email our new Alumni email. Don't forget to include THEN and NOW photos. Help us by including the subject - Newsletter: Alumni Spotlight.

Social Media:

Follow us on Facebook! Search Blue Ridge staff alumni social media accounts. We'll be adding more platforms soon.

SCAN TO UPDATE THE ALUMNI DATABASE

WITH SINCERE APPRECIATION

The needs for assistance in recovery and rebuilding at YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly, created by the devastation of Hurricane Helene, brought together alumni to help with awareness and fundraising.

While things on the mountain are certainly looking up, these needs continue. We're all excited and proud of the progress the Assembly has made over the past two years.

Staff alumni have been an integral part of the recovery and rebuilding at Blue Ridge, both through physical action and financial contribution.

Alumni who have generously donated to the Assembly's various funds are listed below.

Leigh Clary Abdou
Peter Abney-Crowe
Mrs. Robert and Ann Ackley
Valerie J. Andrews
Melissa Bailey
Sally Weisenfelder Bair
Carey Baumgarten
Rebecca H. Becherer
George Y. Birdsong
Kendall Edwards Bolding
Alan L. Bolick
Hildy Bowbeer
Joseph A. Bowbeer
Phyllis Bradford
Sherry (Stone) Brees
Jane Weisenfelder Brown
Julie Caldwell
Vicki L. Campbell
Jennifer Voskuhl Canipe and Robert Canipe
Mrs. Marcia Carter
Angel Castillo, Jr.
Emily and Jeff Chapman
Cliff Christian
Mike †and Amy Clarke
Paisley Ann Cloyd
Dana Colarulli
Nancy Voss-Coleman and Barry Coleman
Rhonda Connor
Michael Craft
Abbye Crowe
Tracy N. Crowe
Angela and Charles Crumpler
Celina Cundy
Judy L. Cunningham
Michelle Dauble
Mark E. Davis as tribute to Mary Parker Davis †
Timothy A. Davis
Marvin Martin Day
Victoria Eyster Deem
Lynn J. Deese
Timothy Dempsey
Leslie and Richard Dennis
Chip and Margaret Dillon
Melissa Dobbs-Fenton
Todd Dorris
Lynda H. Dossett
Robert Downing
Dan Dunaway
Beth B. and Paul Dye
Kurt and Peggy Eckel
Robert Gray Edmiston
Frances Eldreth
Patrick and Mary-Margaret Enfinger
Carol Eubank
Stephenie and Patrick Fahy





WELCOME HOME!

Join the team at YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly to celebrate together this Holiday Season on the Mountain!

We have two amazing events designed to help families - like yours! - make special memories in a place we all hold dear!

Learn more online today - https://blueridgeassembly.org/family-camp/

2027 STAFF ALUMNI REUNION

HELP US PLAN THE 2027 REUNION

The Staff Alumni Events Committee wants your ideas for the 2027 Staff Alumni Reunion on the Mountain. Please scan the QR to fill in the questionnaire by November 10.

We can't wait to get together next year!

WITH SINCERE APPRECIATION

Continued

Allison Flick
Sarah Robinson Flick
Eric and Stephanie Stafford Ford
Travis and Laura Foxx
Robert Van Geyt Gage and Diane D. Gage
Rich and Susan Gapen
Jonathan and Joy Darby Gardberg
Courtney Garner
Julianne Taylor Gaston
Larry and Carol Geiger
Sarah Young Gessner
James and Lizanne Gibson
Dr. Richard J Gibson
Leigh Girard
Lerea Goldthwaite
Sandra Grayson
Nancy and Tracy Gunter and Walker
Cheryl and Steve Hale
Sarah Halterman
Cathy and Hank Hanusch
Peggy Haufle
Patricia Hazelton
Perry and Nancy Hendrix
Anthony Herrmann
Roger and Rosalyn Hibbard
Christopher and Holly Hibbard
Ben Hollenberg
Amy E. Hollifield
Annetta Hough
Becky Howard
Maureen Howell
Forrest Jerkins
Cal and Patty Johnson
Beverly Jones
Shauna Joseph
Jo Joyce
Cathy Justus
Scott Keen
Bob and Sue Keith
Marilyn and Fred Keith
Ken and Kitty Kelly
Maura Kelly (McCallister)
Tanner Kelly
Saralynn and Stanley Kerr
Kristen Kimbrel
Cyrus B. King
Kay Lambert King
Jenny Kopf
Pamela and Cidambi Kumar
Peggy Leis
Bill and Jane Lepine
Jim and Martha Loar
Kim and Lynn Logan
Jon Long
Martin Luna
Eallen Adams Mackey
Marina Madsen
Carol Magrath
Joan Mahery
Richard Mallory
Henry Martin
Timothy Mason
Amanda Masuen
Dr. Jeff and Rev. Rebecca Mathis
Valery (Jones) McCandless
Fred K. "Ted" McCoy
David McGrady and Katharine McKee
Maria McKeown
Don and Mary McMahill
Rebecca McWhorter
Susan Carraway Medina
Kristina Lynn Moe
Susanna Montgomery
Brian Moore
Jane Moreau
Dave and Barb Mueller
Terri Lee Washburn Nagahashi
Sarah Naylor
Mike Nicholson
Margaret Odell
Karen Ogan
Dennis and Valerie Patenotte
Hannah R. Parks
Elizabeth Paternostro
Gary Pinkerton
Barbara Pinkston
Bill Pollard
Lori Price
Gretchen and Craig Purser
Jon Reese
Polly Rehbein
Sally Brown Rhoden
Andrew Rhodes
Bob and Louise Rice
Darby Risner
Kerrie Risner
Stephen E. Roberts
Angela A. Robertson
Jean Roggenkamp and Todd Miller
Paco Sanchez
Deborah (Moody) Schellhase
Mary Ann Washburn Schmidt
Nancy Washburn Schmidt
Lori Ann Shoemaker
Charles W. and Constance K. Smith
Craig and Maggie Smith
Robin Smith
Mariah Snider
Linda Sperath
Ann Sprayberry
Kirsten Stephenson
Julie Keen Stevens
Jeff and Cindy Stewart
Conway and Polly Stone
Mike and Judy Stone
Art and Carol Straughn
Kerry Stubbs
Patti McCarty Sullivan
Sarah Sunu
Sarah Tackett
Elizabeth Tannenbaum
Ilsa Teppo
Dana Thompson
Joy Thurlow
Angela Thurman
Niel van Graan
Robert Vignes
Scott and Cheryl Elrod Washburn
John and Beth Waters
Les and Julie Watkins
Chip Watts
The Weatherford Family
Patti Carr Weber
Susan S. and Earle L. Whittington III
Cameron Williams
Diane Willmann
Charlie Wilson
Janet Windham
Vicki Winslow
Debbie Wood
Bill and Susan Wooten III
Bootsie Harvie Wynne
Laura Yost-Grande
Dr. and Mrs. William F. (Ted)† Young
Chris and Grant Young

† Deceased

All Staff Alumni donors between January 2024 and October 15, 2026. And all those who wish to remain anonymous.





ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT
Tim Dempsey

LOCATION: San Jose, California

STAFF YEARS: Collegiate staff, summer 1984; Summer Trails supervisor and ambassador to Nigeria, 1985; Offseason, Sept. 1985-Feb. 1986; Younts Hall director, summer 1987; Offseason, March 1987-Feb. 1988. (My sister Sheila served on college staff in 1988 and 1989 with the Blue Ridge Singers and as an ambassador to England.)

FAVORITE BLUE RIDGE MEMORY: Gosh, so many. I guess the best was just sitting in a room full of fellow BRA staff and feeling like all of those folks were my good friends

BEYOND BLUE RIDGE (what I've been up to): After my years at BRA, I spent two semesters in seminary, worked seasonal camp jobs at several YMCAs in the Southeast, then returned home to Peoria, Illinois, to direct gang prevention programs for inner city youth.

In 1994 I moved to Puebla, Mexico, where unbeknownst to me at the time I lived in the same neighborhood as 1984-'85 BRA alum Lydia Lopez. Her son and my daughter attended the same school. I lived in Puebla until 2000, working as a track coach and athletic performance coach at two different universities and serving as a speed coach for Mexican players in the NFL. I regularly go back to Mexico to conduct sports performance training for clinics, professional and university teams.

In 2000, I moved to San Jose, California, where I still reside. I spent 20 years as the athletic fitness director at a wonderful nonprofit. Now, I am an athletic performance specialist at a physical therapy clinic. In addition to my projects in Mexico, over the years I've been blessed with opportunities to present to the Costa Rica Olympic Committee, the US Olympic Training Center, the San Francisco 49ers, Blazesports Atlanta, Veterans Affairs Administration and many others.

I have two wonderful bilingual, bicultural daughters, the product of a BRA romance. They live out the spirit of BRA and Willis Weatherford.

When I returned from Nigeria to a pretty empty BRA in late September 1985, I came down with some sort of latent West African virus that still flares up to this day. Mary McMahill set me up with doctor appointments in Asheville , and Sara Hoover looked after me in Weatherford. I'd take hot baths in the only bathtub in Weatherford, then walk the trails for hours at a time to recover. I took care of the trails the summer before I left for Nigeria, so I feel like the mountain returned the favor by healing me. So yeah, I'm very attached to BRA and owe so much to it, the people I met, the philosophy and the place itself.

Fundraising Committee Report from Scott Washburn, 1968-1979

A small team of former Blue Ridge staff alumni jumped into action shortly after the catastrophic Hurricane Helene storm and devised a plan to reach as many former Blue Ridge staff as possible. The results were astounding — over two hundred individuals responded, contributing just over $500,000.

With that success, the committee is now turning its attention to providing ongoing support to the Assembly- for both the continuing restoration of the building and grounds as well as the youth and teen program support that Blue Ridge provides to groups such as Leaders' School, Conference On National Affairs and the Christian Values Conference. This approach – Place, People and Programs – will be the basis of our committee work going forward beginning this fall with our efforts to support the $500,000 annual campaign. There are a number of giving options available to support Blue Ridge including Green Rocker Society, GEMs (Giving Every Month), and Endowment.

Look for an email or expect a phone call from one of our committee members in the next few weeks to share the latest on our fundraising efforts and invite your support.

SCAN TO GIVE ONLINE

SCAN TO MAKE A TRIBUTE