

December 27, 2016

Happy New Year!

The end of the year arrived very quickly! I had intended the newsletter to be at least a quarterly event, but the everyday events got in the way. I wanted to share with you what has transpired the last half of this year.

Working with youth at Joy Ranch - In March, I began meeting with the children at Joy Ranch, a Christian Home for Children. In the beginning, I was meeting with the boys and girls of all ages, providing exercise activities with devotions and prayer. We quickly noticed that most the boys were getting a lot of physical activity with their extracurricular sports, so we adapted the program to work mostly with the girls. During our visits, I always shared a devotion or scripture and some physical activity (jump rope, soccer, basketball, outdoor playground time, etc.). In August, I began working part time at Joy Ranch as the Media & Communications Specialist, so it's been hard to find as much time for weekly visits. However, we still have sporadic events such as swimming lessons when we can.

GO Group - In June, I had a meeting in my home to brainstorm ideas how we could address needs in the community. Some ladies from my church as well as some family members attended the meeting and we decided to hold a one day Bible school as well as a bake sale to benefit Joy Ranch. After another meeting in July, both events were held in August. We raised over \$300 for Joy Ranch and had a one day Bible school at Stone Mountain Baptist Church in Laurel Fork.

Volunteering at Laurel Meadows Nursing Home - I continued to visit the folks at Laurel Meadows on a weekly basis through August - painting fingernails, praying, and listening to stories the residents told. Upon taking the job at Joy Ranch, it has been hard to find as much time to visit, but I still do when I can.

Youth Fitness Class - What an experience! I offered a youth fitness class at Carroll Wellness Center in July once a week and had about 6 kids attend. I taught them about heart rate, nutrition, and created different activities for each session. Opportunities arose to talk about Jesus and our faith, which I'm sure was a divine thing! We ended the month with a smoothie party and each child got a goodie bag with a journal and healthy snack, along with a recap of what we had learned. I would like to do this again next summer.

Speaking at YFi - Also in July, I spoke on Teen Health and Fitness at the YFi Youth Summit held in Max Meadows, VA. Initially, I thought it would mostly be about nutrition and exercise, but after researching the topic, I found the biggest issue in teen health and wellness is spiritual and emotional. I gave a very emotional speech about how we need to help these hurting youth before they hurt themselves.



CrossFun Games - This was the biggest undertaking of the year! I'm so thankful for the many volunteers that helped facilitate the athletic competition and for the organizations that donated door prizes for the event. The fifteen competitors worked hard in the blazing September heat, but got beautiful handmade trophies by Rob Redus.



Exercise Class at Mayberry Presbyterian Church - In October, I began teaching a Christian exercise class which is free to anyone who wishes to attend. We meet each Tuesday evening at 5 pm in the community building and exercise to contemporary Christian music. Class sizes range from 4-8 people on average and we have a wonderful time of fellowship. Each session included scripture/devotions and prayer.

It has been a blessed, busy year. I'm not sure what 2017 holds, but I will continue to follow God's lead and serve as He directs. **Please continue to pray for this ministry and if you feel led to donate to the cause, your gift would be most appreciated. The details are at thrivewellnessministries.com/donatepurchase/.**

Thank you for your support this year. I pray that you and yours have a blessed coming year!

Mandy Nester

Founder

Thrive Wellness Ministries, LLC