

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEEDING AVERY FAMILIES WELCOMES BONNIE CLARK AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Newland, N.C.—May 2, 2025—Feeding Avery Families, Inc. announced today that it has appointed Bonnie Clark as its next executive director, effective May 27, 2025. She will succeed Sally Loftis, who has served as interim executive director since September 2024 and who will remain on staff through June 27, 2025.

A dedicated and experienced nonprofit leader, Clark is the associate executive director of the Williams YMCA of Avery County, where she has served in managerial roles since 2013. A resident of Linville for over 20 years, she moved to the area after graduating from the University of South Florida with a degree in biology. Clark lives with her husband of 22 years and their two daughters, Kendall and Camryn.



“It is a privilege to join Feeding Avery Families at this critical time for our community,” Clark said. “Families, youth, and seniors depend on us for healthy, nutritious food. The need is great: many in our area are still recovering from Hurricane Helene, and economic uncertainty and funding cuts only increase the strain on families. Despite these challenges, Feeding Avery Families will be there to support our neighbors.”

Feeding Avery Families, Inc. (FAF) is a nonprofit food pantry in Avery County, N.C., focused on eliminating hunger by providing supplemental food assistance to those in need. With the support of volunteers, generous donors, and community partners, it serves residents of Avery and the surrounding areas, including Newland, Banner Elk, Elk Park, Beech Mountain, Crossnore, and Linville, providing 60 percent of food assistance in the county.

Over 500 families receive food assistance monthly from Feeding Avery Families, whether by shopping in-person or drive-thru at the Newland distribution center or by taking advantage of mobile distributions and home deliveries across Avery County. Children and families also receive food via the backpack program to help on weekends and holidays. In 2024, FAF distributed more than 710,470 pounds of food—enough for 592,058 individual meals—at a value of \$1.4 million.

Clark brings extensive fundraising, teambuilding, and community engagement experience to the executive director role at FAF. Since 2020, she has overseen branch operations, assisted with annual budgeting and grant processes, and built relationships with individuals and community partners at the Williams YMCA of Avery County. From 2013 to 2019, she was the branch’s director of healthy living initiatives, responsible for the wellness center, group exercise classes, and chronic disease prevention and management programs. Her portfolio included expanding after-school and early childhood offerings; addressing food insecurity; and leading the Y’s Healthy Living Programs, which help adults manage and prevent the onset of chronic diseases.

“Bonnie Clark is a collaborative, compassionate leader who understands the challenges we face in Avery County,” said Laura Russell, chair of the Feeding Avery Families board of directors. “She believes deeply in our call to eliminate hunger in our region, and, best of all, she has that rare combination of know-how and heart to get the job done. I am confident she will bring smart, energetic leadership to this important cause.”

Food insecurity is a chronic problem in Avery County. Before Hurricane Helene, approximately 3,000 Avery County residents—17 percent—experienced some degree of uncertainty about their next meal. This includes nearly 1,000 children. In the aftermath of the hurricane, FAF increased its food distribution by 92 percent, providing cleaning supplies, diapers, heaters, coats, bottled water, and more, in addition to food. In 2024, Feeding Avery Families also distributed 127,427 pounds of fresh produce, promoting healthier eating and supporting local farmers.

“It has been a privilege to be part of the Feeding Avery Families team, where I have seen up-close the tremendous impact we have in our neighbors’ lives every day. The devastation of Hurricane Helene was indescribable, but so was the outpouring of support we received from friends far and wide,” said Sally Loftis, who led FAF in the days and months after the deadly storm. “Bonnie is the right person to lead Feeding Avery Families as it writes a new chapter.”

“I am grateful to the board of directors and search committee for placing their trust in me,” Clark said. “Most of all, I am excited to get to work and join our incredible volunteers and community partners to tackle food insecurity in Avery County. Together, I know we will continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our neighbors and friends.”

ABOUT FEEDING AVERY FAMILIES, INC.

Feeding Avery Families, Inc., is a 501(c)3, Christian nonprofit organization dedicated to providing supplemental food assistance in Avery County, North Carolina. Our food distribution center is located at 189 Old Vale Road, Newland, NC. Our mailing address is PO Box 1075, Banner Elk, NC 28604. All contributions (100%) go directly to Avery County families who need help after exhausting all other available resources. To learn more about receiving food assistance; to inquire about volunteer opportunities; or to make a donation to support our work, please visit our website, <http://feedingaveryfamilies.org>. Follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/feedingavery>.

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