

Publication: The Clipper; Date: Mar 14, 2008; Section: Clipper; Page: 26

RECREATION



# Greenbrier North facility still growing; here's

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In 1994, the Ace of Clubs racquetball venue sold its building to the YMCA and the Greenbrier North branch was born. The health and fitness center, however, struggled to grow. It lacked a swimming pool and was located off a main thoroughfare, among other things.

But, almost 15 years later, the Old Greenbrier Road facility has accomplished something fitness director Tariq Robinson said he was told was virtually impossible. The Greenbrier North YMCA's membership now exceeds more than 1,000 households.

Membership director Laura Mellott attributes much of the boom to the staff.

"We're the friendliest staff. We hear that a lot from customers," Mellott said. "We also work really hard to market our programs and services. It's a challenge, but it works."

The growth has allowed the Greenbrier North to provide more programs. It now has specific programs for youth such as basketball and soccer



The Greenbrier North YMCA staff includes, front row from left: Alicia Gore, group exercise coordinator; and Amanda Bass, operations coordinator; back row: Tariq Robinson, health and fitness director; Nicholas Henney, 12-Week Challenge coordinator; C.J. Gajan, sports and youth fitness coordinator; Laura Mellott, membership director; and Jennifer Carr, executive director.

leagues. It even has several programs for adults that other Chesapeake YMCA's do not offer, including belly dancing and an adult dodgeball league.

"We're looking forward to dodgeball," Robinson said. "We're trying to bring back the old school days."

That's not to say the facility's directors have forgotten where they started. Racquetball still rules at Greenbrier

North. With five racquetball courts, the facility holds up to four major tournaments per year, drawing players from several East Coast states. It has also been an occasional stop for the pro circuit, with all the top 10 pro players making a stop here last year. That's in addition to offering a full range of programs for local amateur players.

Greenbrier North also prides

itself on creating an after-school program, headed by Kim Midgette. The program offers activities for youths up to age 14, including various physical education games and exercises, arts and crafts, communication skills-building activities and summer camps. The program also assists with homework and focuses on specific needs like reading (Kidz L.it) and math (Kidz Math).

Greenbrier North executive director Jennifer Carr said the after-school program started in 1999 and is now found in 11 Chesapeake primary, intermediate and middle schools. It currently serves about 700 students.

Increased membership helps fund those programs as well as upgrade exercise equipment and provide fitness and nutrition programs for individual members of all ages, including martial arts, and aerobics and weight lost challenges.

Robinson said the growth hasn't changed the staff's personalized attention. He likens the staff's motto to an old popular TV program.

"It's like 'Cheers,' 'where everybody knows your name,'" Robinson said. "A lot of members like Greenbrier North because it's still like a hidden treasure to them. We're able to give them personal attention."

For information on Greenbrier North's programs, call Tariq Robinson at 366-9622, or go to [www.ymcashr.org](http://www.ymcashr.org).

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