



2023 NEWSLETTER

Vol. 8, for 2022-2023

Welcome to the 2023 Climb Newsletter.

The Newsletter highlights the stories of students, coaches, and Climb instructors and staff that are reaching for the highest levels of excellence in speech and debate. A big thanks to Adilina Aguirre who put together the initial draft of this newsletter and to all the participants that shared their experiences.

Click on individual stories to read about Climb the Mountain!

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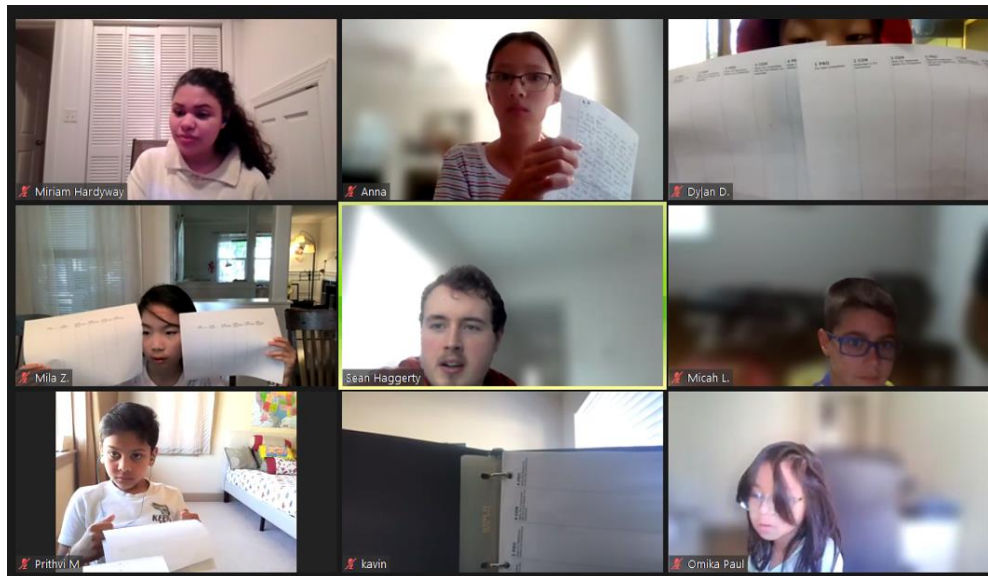
We’ve had another great year!

Enjoy and please feel free to contact me, Jim Hanson at jim@climbthemountain.us with

questions, ideas, edits, omissions, thoughts, etc.

Climbers show off their deep thinking skills

As always, Climbers are a unique bunch who both impress and amuse their instructors every day. In particular, the depth of their abilities to think critically about the world around them is really impressive. The world can be a scary and confusing place, especially for young minds who are still so new to it. However, you'd be surprised at how much kids pay attention to the things that happen around them. Debate provides the opportunity to exchange opinions about those things in an environment that inspires productive discussion. Our debaters do that on any given day!



Miriam Hardyway along with Sean Haggerty teaching elementary students. We have the kids show us their flowsheets to keep them on task but it is the kids that often have us on task!

Climb greeter and instructor Miriam Hardyway described one instance of her elementary students with much pride and happiness: "When I asked them to think of topics that they would consider debating, one kid said he would like to have a respectful debate with his peers about the importance of NATO and the ongoing wars globally. I was taken aback by the maturity of the debate that followed, where I got to see adult level critical thinking from 4th and 5th graders who were not only aware of, but keeping up with political and economic factors that greatly affect us, and able to use the debate practices that they were to learn in future courses. I realized then and there the true importance our youths will have for our future!"

And it's true! These kids will be the ones in charge someday, so it's more important than ever to encourage such deep discussions and give them plenty of room to express their thoughts. Thankfully, with the great team of instructors and Climb's programs, we can do just that!

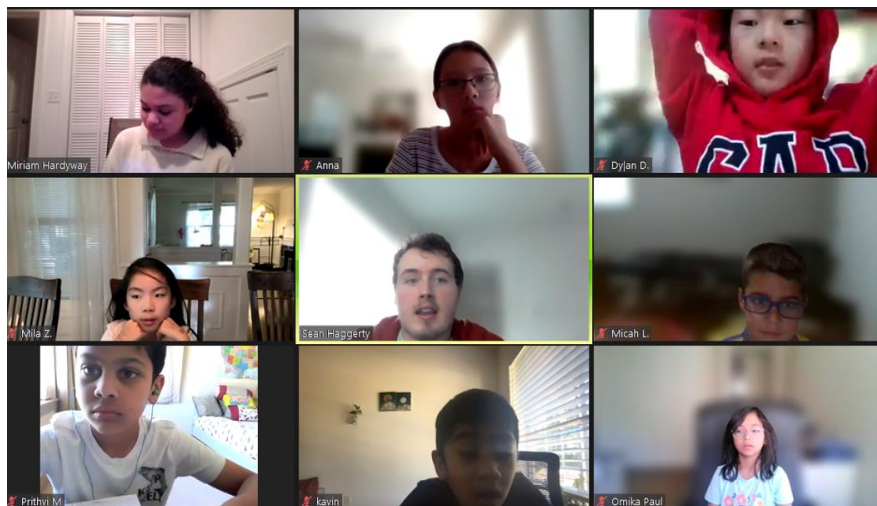
What kind of debating do Climb students do?

Climb offers both speech and debate events, but what are they and how do they differ from one another? Let's start with Debate. We offer some interesting debate options that many of our readers won't be familiar with.

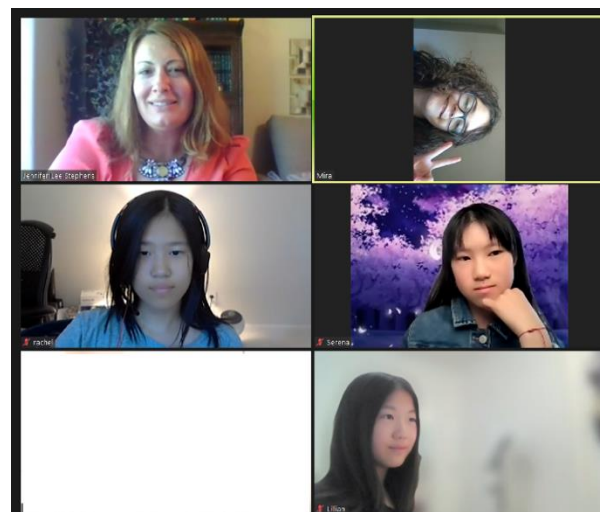
Climb's elementary students debate in teams of 3 or 4 in Pro Con debate which has been like a short public forum debate. That format is changing as we move into 2024. In the new format, students know their topics ahead of time and debate each topic on both sides. The topics focus on current issue topics that are relevant to younger kids such as cell phone use and lunch time length but also topics such as nuclear power, plastics, and endangered species. Each student will give a 1.5 minute pro or con case, ask and answer questions for 1 minute, spend 1 minute responding to their opponent's case, defend their case for 1 minute, and for 1 final minute make their final argument for why their side won the debate. This new format pushes the students to do every key debating skill there is, every single

round. The new pro-con format of debate is an easier format to teach including flowing which is despite all the short speeches, much easier to teach in this format.

Students (same ones from the previous page) are now ready to go for their elementary debate.



Climb's middle schoolers debate in teams of three using the "Middle School 3 on 3 Parli" format which is very much like the Middle School Public Debate Format. Students know half their topics ahead of time; the other half, they receive a topic 30 minutes before they begin debating. The format has three prop 5 minute speeches and then three opp 5 minute speeches. First speeches have cases and as the debate progresses, students refute and defend their cases leading to the 3rd speakers who make a case for why their side won the debate.



Above right, Instructor Jennifer Stephens works with middle school debaters.

High schoolers in our program get to compete in the Lincoln-Douglas format of debate. In the past, LD debate was very traditional value criteria and contentions and in many ways it still is. That said, the topics have become much more policy like (what we should/shouldn't do) and as our high schoolers move into open division they have to be ready for faster speaking and more advanced kinds of arguments such as kritiks, theory, and counterplans. Students debate the NSDA (formerly NFL) national topic.

To the right, Instructor Beth Cole teaches LD debaters.

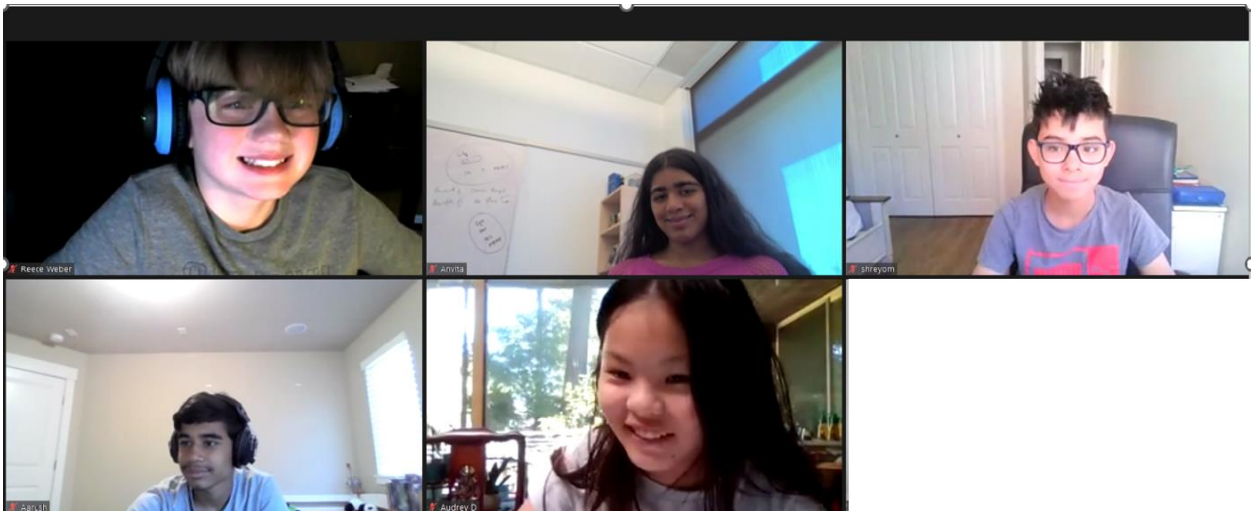
Some of you may be asking why we aren't doing policy-cx debate. Sadly, very few tournaments in the state of Washington offer that kind of debate so we have focused on LD debate.



In all of these kinds of debating, students have to think fast, keep track of what is said during the debate to try and refute the opponents' arguments while supporting their own.

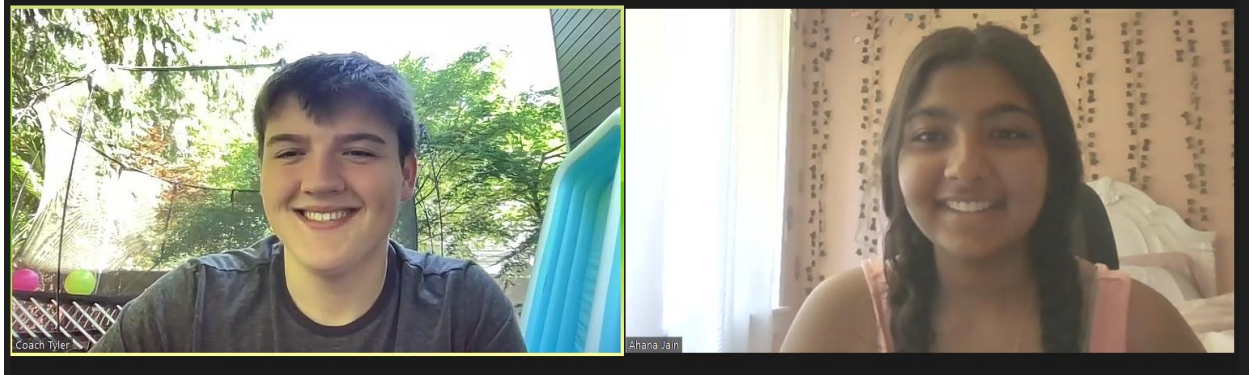
What kind of speaking do students do in Climb?

In Speech, students work by themselves and create a speech about something they're passionate about. The speaking events are what many of our readers are used to except there is one new event. Climb currently teaches four types of speech events: Platform, Extemporaneous, Interpretive, and PowerPoint. **Platform speeches** are informative, persuasive or entertaining speeches about any topic. Students are loosely expected to memorize the speech and to present it in an effective manner without reading/looking at notes much. **Interpretation** lets students perform chosen passages from a book, play, or speech given by a public figure.



Students meet for speech preparation and practice.

Extemporaneous starts out with students taking time to research several given topics, then give a speech on a randomly selected one when their research time is up. PowerPoint, the new event, is exactly what you think it is. We emphasize the use of visuals with pictures and videos and using less bullets. We want students to use the PowerPoints to tell their stories-to keep it interesting but at the same time emphasize solid research supporting their speech topics (which are often like Platform but are usually topics that lend themselves to visuals more). Each speech event provides an opportunity for students to embrace their creative side and use their personal voices to express themselves.



Tyler Zabolio provides instruction with a student; additional students below.

Overall, speech gives students love the chance to express their views which they love doing. Each event gives students the flexibility to speak their minds. No matter what style of speaking someone prefers, Climb has something to offer everyone!

Help us reach every kid.

Did you know that Climb provides speech and debate education to 30 to 40 students each session at no cost including providing loaner laptops?

We are able to do this with your donations and support. Will you help us make this possible?

Visit <https://www.climbthemountain.us/support-us> to donate a gift of money or your time.



What is the most beneficial aspect of speech and debate?

You probably know that speech and debate can have many good effects on students—but which thing seems most beneficial to you? Climbers learn to become skilled at speaking, of course, but it goes much further than that!

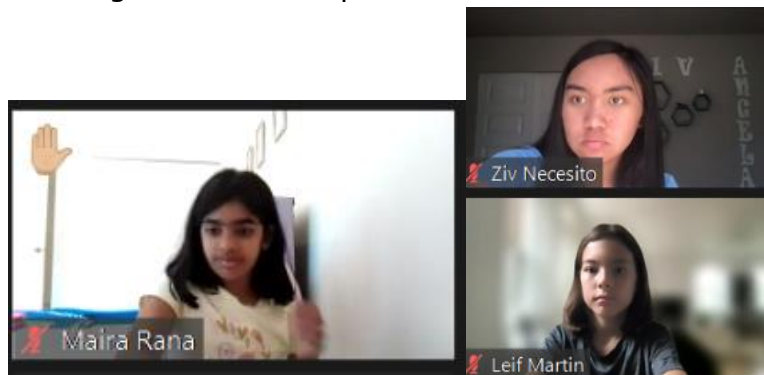
Every debater needs a case before they can engage in a debate—that is, a set of arguments supporting their side. Climb provides students arguments and the skills to put together their speeches and debate cases. This allows students to build vital research skills they can easily apply to writing essays and reports in school.

Sure, anyone can just Google or Chat GPT the answer to any fact based and some reasoned questions these days, but finding information for a case requires knowledge of how to find specific results to back up your

argument, what makes a trustworthy source, etc. Students learn these important aspects as they work on their debate cases, and it makes them all the better at research and hones their critical thinking skills. Those skills are needed even to make Chat GPT work right and to interpret and edit that information.

Jim Hanson's List of 7 Benefits to Speech-Debate:

1. **Strong Research Skills**
2. **Strong Communication Skills**
3. **Increased Knowledge about our World**
4. **Increased Critical Thinking Skills**
5. **Develop Team Work Skills**
6. **Build Connections with other Schools**
7. **Beneficial to Student Futures**



Students in our program learn all kinds of skills and knowledge.

Through speech and debate, students can also understand the fundamentals of what makes a good argument. We argue over all sorts of things in our daily lives, but being able to argue your point effectively can actually be pretty challenging! Speech and Debate provides an environment for students to do just that. Building and reading debate cases and prepare speeches teaches how to structure arguments and present information in a persuasive way that others can understand. Responding to an opponent can help students learn how to protect their own arguments while refuting the opponents' arguments. And of course, the

actual speaking encourages speaking clearly and assertively. These skills can be carried over into everyday life to help students communicate about important issues and to settle disputes in a calm, organized way.

Maya Garzelli works with students.



Arguably the most important benefit, however, is the confidence it can build within students. Both shy and outspoken students alike will practice speaking in front of others over and over, and become better communicators with each round. Through both the hard-earned wins and the tough losses, teammates support and inspire each other, becoming friends who can bring each other out of their shells. Speech and Debate teaches Climbers to stand up during the heat of an argument and advocate for themselves and their teammates, which is a skill they'll keep for the rest of their lives!

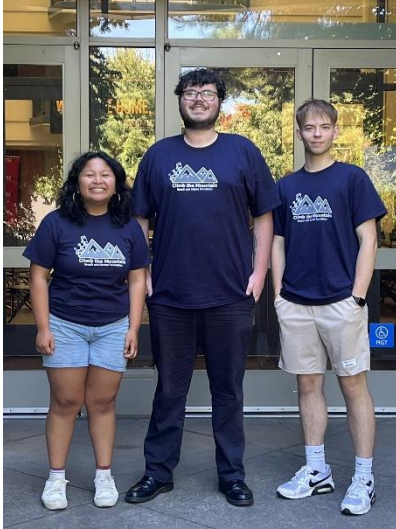


Students participate in our program.

**So, What do YOU think?
What is the most important benefit of Speech and
Debate?**

In Person Programs see BIG Growth

COVID-19 made things tough on pretty much everyone and Climb was no exception—in-person events were put on hold for a while as the program shifted to online only to ensure everyone's safety during the pandemic. Things went well and we hit some of the highest enrollment numbers we have seen at the peak of Covid. Probably because the kids had nothing better to do! :)



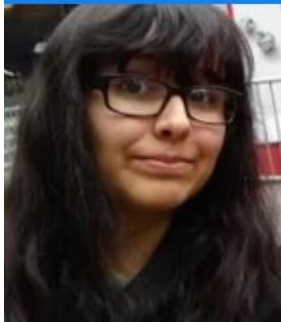
Back to being serious, Climb began a bit over a year ago with an in-person clinic led up by Jason Smith, Climb board member and a leader in the Marysville-Everett community (also a quite excellent debater in his high school and college years and even today). Then, Jim started hosting in-person tournaments at Seattle University and he returned to teaching in person at Seattle University. With that mind, Climb had in-person classes at several schools over the previous year and then this summer, an in-person camp. Now, this fall, Climb has reintroduced in-person classes on a broader scale.

Geneva, Alex, and Ed, instructors at our In-Person Summer Camp held at Seattle University

Amid the shift, the program has continued to on a strong path! Jim especially notes that “the in-person programs have grown tremendously this fall and appear headed in the same direction for our winter programs. Doing the program in-person really brings connections for students—ones that some students highly value.” Online events are incredibly useful and have interaction but being able to learn and debate face-to-face are something some students and parents really want. Over the course of 2023, Climb was able to host classes at Seattle University, Elevate Redmond, Seattle Country Day School, BASIS Independent Bellevue, and Jing Mei Elementary School. Bellevue College is a new and upcoming location.

Expanding Climb's in-person programs wasn't without its challenges. One of the biggest benefits of online classes is the ability to employ instructors who otherwise wouldn't be able to commute to all the different places Climb hosts in-person events. The number of instructors who could actually attend things in person was lower than expected and made staffing very difficult. However, all was not lost! Jim reported that even with this hurdle, “we scraped by and made it through, and we have a plan in place to make sure we are better staffed. We're looking forward to full programs at Seattle University, Bellevue College, and in Redmond (Elevate) for winter.” Naturally, this is wonderful news; bringing in-person classes and tournaments to more students provide them with the experience to confidently embark on future speaking ventures!

One Instructor's My Little Pony Story



Working with such great students makes for some very interesting stories. Everyone has plenty, I'm sure, but allow me, Adilina Aguirre, to share one of my own!

Adilina Aguirre, Climb instructor and Newsletter writer.

One time, I was judging a round between two elementary teams. Sometimes, students ask me to put up a timer as an easy way for everyone to keep track of their speaking times; this was one of those instances. Yet for some reason, my Zoom screen share wasn't working right that day, and the timer just wasn't showing up for anyone except me. The students really wanted that timer, though, so I asked if anyone would be willing to share their screen instead. One of them agreed, and she did a stellar job at keeping time for everyone in addition to flowing and giving her speeches.

When it came time for me to submit the debate's results, I asked the students to hang tight while I did. During those few minutes, the student who was in charge of the timer took advantage of the fact that she was still screen sharing and played a song from the My Little Pony movie while singing along, giving everyone an impromptu concert! And funnily enough, the song was the *exact* length of time that I needed to enter the results and come back! We all had a good laugh over it before getting into our post-debate discussion and feedback; it was definitely a highlight of that session!

Funny anecdotes aside, much of the humor and joy in what we instructors do comes from the random things students say from time to time. Here are just a few quotes that stick out from my time as an instructor:

- "My source is my awesome, creative brain!" – an elementary student on the second day of class, upon being asked to give evidence for her claim.
- "I'm just not a creative type of guy. I'm a very normal, average person." – an elementary student who had a bit of trouble coming up with an idea for his PowerPoint speech.
- "Miss, why do you smile so much?" – a middle school student's completely unprompted question for me.
- "I don't play video games. My parents made me learn to code instead." – a middle school student who then proceeded to show everyone the Raspberry Pi he programmed by himself.

Julie Badley

Julie Badley, a long time instructor and hiring manager, fell ill and passed away early in 2023. Jim was absolutely stunned and saddened by this news. Jim noted "Julie was a truly special person. I keep looking at her picture and I think of talking with her. I can't believe that won't happen again on this earth. Julie loved teaching speech and debate."



Julie, upper left, instructing along with Maya Garzelli.

Jim added "I can't tell you how many times Julie went out of her way to help kids and me to get things done. She really cared about others and about speech and debate. She had a real interest in talking about and engaging in teaching. If you know me, Jim, well, I'm not the biggest talker but I'd spend an hour plus talking with Julie after Climb sessions sometimes. She sometimes had to go to the hospital and teach from her hospital bed. I was amazed at her perseverance; it was honestly remarkable. And ironically, she would contact me and ask if it was okay for her to teach as she did not want to scare the kids with her being at the hospital. Of course it was okay—Julie was such a great instructor."

Julie's passing brought forth many people who echoed their sympathies and support for her and her family. Denise Vaughan, her former college coach and Climb instructor, along with her son Alex Vaughan, Climb instructor and greeter, and Tom Hyatt, former debater, attended Julie's funeral with Jim. Thadeus Smith, former Climb instructor, noted "I got to teach alongside Julie for two years - Her dedication to debate and to Climb was such an inspiration to me, and her love for her students was evident whenever she got to give them awards."

Julie we miss you so much and hope you know how much we look up to you and smile upon all you have done. May you rest in peace.

Games Debaters Play

If there's one thing to be said about speech and debate, it's that it almost never ends on time. More often than not, things tend to run late, but from time to time, things will go a little too smoothly and they'll end early! So, what to do with that extra time? Well, it depends on the instructor, but a popular option is to play a discussion game with the students!



Lyd Haindfield working with a student.

An old favorite is the desert island/spaceship game, where participants have to convince the others why either they or a person of their choosing should or shouldn't be voted off the island (or why they should or shouldn't be taken on a space adventure, depending on how the game is themed that day). Players will then vote yay or nay, depending on how convincing the speaker was. This game can bring about many zany and engaging conversations about why Ariana Grande or a particular student who wants to be a veterinarian would be useful to have around. More importantly, it allows students to think and explain their logic in a fun, low-stakes way.

One of the most important parts of a debate is asking questions during cross-examination time—it's where key concepts are clarified and ideas for new arguments are born. However, anyone who's ever partaken in a debate will tell you how hard it is to think of questions sometimes! That's where the rapid-fire question game comes in handy. Each player will take turns asking a question directly related to something in the previous player's question, but they only have about ten seconds to come up with one! For example, someone starts with "Do you agree that cake is better than ice cream?" and the next player asks "Where in your argument did you say chocolate ice cream is the best flavor?" and then "How much money do Americans spend on chocolate each year?" and so on. Because of the short time limit, students have to keep the types of questions they want to ask in mind at all times and pay close attention to what the others are saying, which are both vital skills for debaters!

There are plenty of other great games that can help build communication skills in students during those fleeting moments of down time—these are just two common ones. Still, playing the same games can lead to many different and fun discussions, even among the same groups of people!

Climb the Mountain 2023 Summer Camps

Climb the Mountain hosted two summer debate programs that saw our first in-person participants in over 3 years. Participants came from all over the Puget Sound area, a few other states, and China!



We had high school LD debate, Middle school 3 on 3 Parli debate, Elementary school Pro-Con debate, Congress, and speaking events. Students debated topics on civil disobedience, artificial intelligence teaching, designing cities for people instead of cars, genetic engineering of people, slowing technology, and even US military presence in the Arctic. They also spoke on many topics including baking, animals in the rain forest, how to “glow up,” an extemp speech on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and why schools should start later.

With over 200 students, judges, and instructors, the camps were a success providing instruction and fun for all involved.

Instructor Ed Strok works with students.

Jim goes half time at Seattle University

Climb has grown so much, it has become a full time job for Jim. Doing that on top of a full time job at Seattle University was just too much especially since it was in addition to another non-profit Jim runs, West Coast Publishing.

Jim noted, “It was just too much. I’m getting older. I was just barely keeping up. I told my chair that I needed to cut back. I continue as Director of Forensics at Seattle University but I will only teach one class each year. I remain busy but I can focus more now and it is much more manageable.”

“Each day keeps me very active. I’m answering emails, setting up classes, communicating with instructors, helping parents.” If you know Jim, he’s making lists of how to improve the Climb programs and trying to make Climb work as well as it can. Now he can do that without a huge burden.



We are climbing the mountain!



Climb Highlights Sept. 2022 to Dec. 2023 . . .

- Over the year and a quarter, we instructed 1200+ students in debate and speaking in our afterschool and camp programs.
- Held three tournaments for college students.
- Jared Phillips, our Chief Executive Officer, continued to provide guidance for Climb and handled accounting for all of our activities.
- Jim, as Seattle University Director, hosted twelve Grade 3-12 tournaments and a high school tournament at Seattle University with Climbers attending who won many awards.
- Answered dozens of emails asking questions about speech and debate.
- Did a major update to the national speech and debate contact list.
- Connected coaches to hire assistant coaches and judges for their programs.
- Did many updates and improvements to the Climb afterschool and camp program including the web pages and instructional powerpoints.
- Jim, working with Eliot Woodrich, has done major improvements in the tabulation program Climb uses (PlusTab). Jim has also developed an individual events tabulation program.
- Jim ran and instructed at multiple in-person programs.
- Hosted tournaments and outreach with programs in Canada and in China.
- Hosted the Climb speech and debate camps online in July and August, 2023. Approximately 200 students and coaches participated.

To get the latest news, be sure to check our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/258436737697090/>

Thank you Zach Maghirang

When Climb was starting, we had a lot of setup work to do and Zach Maghirang, one of our longest running Climbers, was right there with Jim getting Climb going. Zach taught at clinics, camps, and our afterschool programs. Zach moved in to being Jim's most relied upon tabulation person—working on multiple very large tournaments and doing so with the highest level of excellence. Jim noted "Zach gave me the support I needed even when things were tedious and kind of 'what are we going to do to make this work.' Zach is a great teacher, really clear and he always has excellent feedback—helping get some of our tournaments back on track when they were having issues. I miss Zach just writing this and I am so grateful for all the work and support Zach provided to Climb and to me. Thank you Zach Maghirang."



Zach over the years.

Donors keep us Climbing!

We are so grateful for the support of so many people. People have donated money. People have donated their time. People have reached out to others to bring them into the world of speech and debate. We thank everyone for their efforts including these donors below (donations from September 2022 to December 2023). ***Did we miss you? We are very sorry for the omission and we want to correct it!*** Please email Jim at jim@climbthemountain.us and tell him. :)

DONORS	
<p>American Online Giving Foundation Beth Cole Beverly Corder Catherine Wieder Char Main and Chris Dunlap Dan Evans Denise Vaughan Diane Gizzi Dr. David McKay Emily Willoughby Glenn Kuper Greg Marsh Jared Phillips and Loan Lam Jessica Clarke Jim & Diana Arango Jim Hanson Joe & Melissa Davenport John Julian Johnathan Venable Joseph Elder Julie Dimeo Kathy Francis Keith Badgley Kim Gottfried</p>	<p>Kim Smith Kohl Dybdahl Mary Corder Mike Bartanen Natalie Neumeier Otter Feehan Philip Nguyen Richard & Teresa Badgley Robert and Nancy Withycombe Ronna Liggett Rosemary Lovell Rowland Hobbs & Angelo Boccia Cedeño Shari and David Barsky Stephen Reed Thadeus Smith Thomas Hyatt Vijay Pusuluri Zach Maghirang Plus 5 anonymous donations</p> <p><i>With special thanks and feels for those donating in honor of Julie Badgley, many noted above but also including: Aunt and Uncle Guy and Rosemary Lovell, Kathy and Bruce Francis, Mike and Micky Corder; cousins Jeremy Flores, JJ Flores, Brian Levy, Katie and Josh Paul, Maggie Corder and Zephen James and Joey Corder.</i></p>

Contribute to the Climb!

[Click here to donate and make a difference](#)

Thank you to all that have helped Climb!

We are so grateful for the instruction and guidance you have provided for our programs—for our kids. ***Did we miss you? We are very sorry for the omission and we want to correct it!*** Please email Jim at jim@climbthemountain.us and tell him. :)

Adriana Amanti

Alex Cruz

Alex Lindgren-Ruby

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Beth Cole

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Sean Haggerty

Shruthi Chandrasekaran

Sloane Goldberg

Stacy Bell

Tyler Tremain

Tyler Zabolio

***And to all of the people
that have helped grow
our community!***

[Click here to donate and make a difference](#)