



## 2022 NEWSLETTER

Vol. 7, 2021-2022

### Welcome to the 2022 Climb Newsletter.

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

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### We've had a great year!

Enjoy and please feel free to contact me, Jim Hanson at [jim@climbthemountain.us](mailto:jim@climbthemountain.us) with ideas, edits, omissions, thoughts, etc.

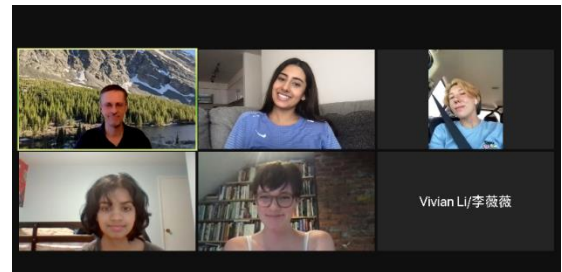
## New Speech Events Program



At Climb we are excited that we have started a new afterschool program for speech! This program started last Spring and we have enjoyed seeing the kids' skills expand in this new arena. We look to develop stronger, more confident speakers and to teach kids how to write and organize various types of speeches.

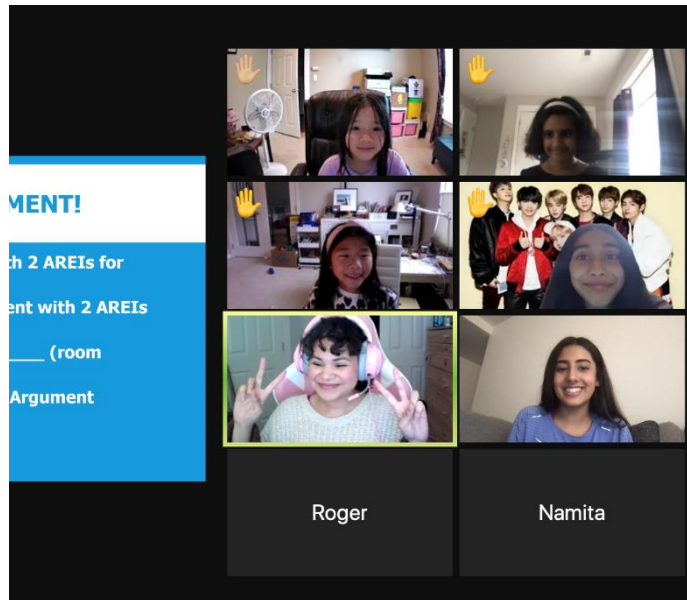
We work with the students on four types of speeches: Extemp, Platform, PowerPoint, and Interp. With Extemp speaking, students discuss a current event topic. They get thirty minutes to research and prepare and then they present a speech with citations very similar to a spoken essay. In Platform speaking, students give a persuasive, comedic/entertaining or informative speech on a topic chosen by the student that they feel strongly about. With PowerPoint speeches, students learn to develop a professional PowerPoint presentation on their topic. The emphasis is on visual with videos and pictures and a minimum of text shown while it matches up with what students are speaking on. Our final type of speech is Interpretive events, where the kids chose an excerpt from literature and present it, very much like acting.

Students in our program choose two of these types of speeches to prepare and present. We have loved seeing the issues the students care most about in their speeches. The students learn more about their topics and from those of their peers. This has been a great addition to have alongside our debate programs.



According to speech lab leader Julie Badgley, platform speeches give kids an opportunity to explore complex topics more in-depth. One student used his speech to explore United States intervention in other countries, particularly Cuba, Venezuela, and Iraq. This student was able to study US sanctions and the effects on other nations. Students in extemp speeches also learn current events. One student was able to argue that NATO should not intervene in the Russia/Ukraine conflict, preparing their speech in under thirty minutes. In addition to developing speaking skills, students become more familiar with the world. They are climbing!

## Loophole Lovers



Nobody can find loopholes like middle school debate students.

Between debates, a game we occasionally play during breaks in our debate programs involves having the students imagine that they are stranded on a desert island. The students are then supposed to convince their fellow classmates that they should not be voted off the island. At first, we said we would just send the losers to some nice hotels. This did not quite work because the first response we got was “vote me off, I’ll take the nice

hotels.” That was not how we intended to entice them to win the game. So, it was clear, that wasn’t going to work.

The next attempt at the framing of the game omitted the hotels, but ran in to problems when a student replied, “The location of this island was not defined, therefore I am placing it three inches away from shore, and we will all just walk to land.” The next student replied “They did not say who we have to be on the island, so I am God and I will teleport all of us back to safety.”

The main lesson we have learned from this game is that the students are very creative. Every time we try to close a loophole, another one seems to appear. They seem to revel in the opportunity to find a hole in the story they were given.

An especially amusing version on this game involved students defending why a famous person should be allowed to stay on the island. After some very good speeches defending Beyonce and Michelle Obama, one student prepared a case for why Taylor Swift should be allowed to stay. Instead of using a straightforward approach, this student took a creative turn. Her case involved using the lyrics and titles of fifteen Taylor Swift songs in the speech. This livened up the game quite a bit!

***Did you know that Climb has provided speech and debate education to well over 100 students at no cost including providing loaner laptops? We are able to do this with your donations and support.***

## History of Climb



Jim with Dylan, Carly, & David BC Clinic in 2015.

We have taken great delight in watching the growth of our Climb program over the years. Climb is now eight plus years old. We began our efforts in Fall 2014 mostly doing clinics at schools and hosting tournaments and camps. We started our afterschool program in 2018 at the International School in Bellevue. The first class had about ten kids. Our program slowly grew to have twenty, then forty kids.

We started advertising using Peachjar, a flyer program the schools have, after hearing about it from a parent. This helped accelerate our growth even further. In the fall of 2020, we had 120 kids enrolled in our program. In the Spring of 2020, we had close to four hundred students in our program. This fall, we have 295 kids and 325 program entries in our debate and speech programs.

We love the opportunity to bring speech and debate into the lives of students. We find it especially important to have debate available as an afterschool program because only about twenty percent of high schools in Washington have any sort of speech and debate program, the number is even lower for elementary and middle schools. So many kids are missing out on the skills that will follow



Jim (far left) at our first camp at PLU.

them through the rest of their school and work careers.

We also are constantly looking for ways to better serve the community. We'll be trying a new way to introduce debate to elementary students. The newer approach will allow us to start as early as 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. We also plan to add Congress debate. In this form of debate a motion is presented and students speak for or against the motion. We are anticipating

adding this form of debate for middle and high school students at Climb. And we know there will be more new ideas and opportunities in the future.



## Climb begins some In-Person Events Again



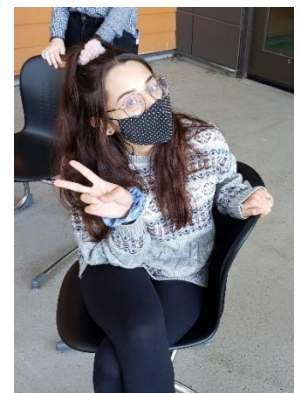
When COVID started, our programs shifted to being exclusively online. We are very glad that we had a way to continue to offer speech and debate during the pandemic. This seems to have worked out very well. As the COVID restrictions have been lifted, however, we have been holding occasional in person events again.

In the fall of 2021, we joined up with Climb Board member Jason Smith for an in-person event (although mostly outdoors) where we taught Marysville students the basics of giving successful speeches. It was a blast and Jason was an excellent host!

After that, we and Seattle University hosted tournaments that our students could attend in-person. These tournaments have the option of attending either in person or online, whichever the students and their families are more comfortable with. Our first mixed tournament was held last Spring. We then continued them at each of our summer camp sessions and had further tournaments this fall.

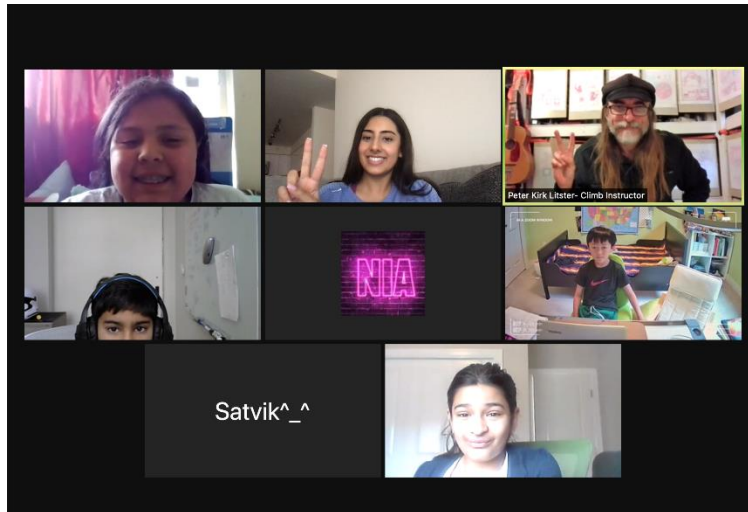


These tournaments have been a great opportunity for the students to meet their friends from the program in person for the first time. They are especially enjoyable because after a long day of speech and debate we often have pizza together to celebrate! These new opportunities have been very exciting for us.



## Funny Kid Stories

Here are some of the more amusing moments from our programs:



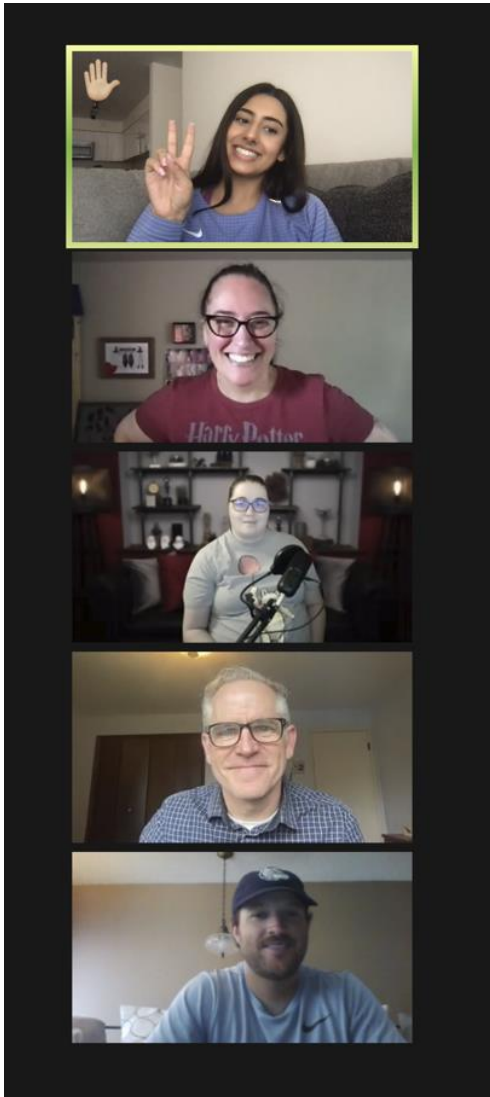
“If we follow my plan, we could save seven billion dollars. And imagine what I could do with seven billion dollars. Bribery. Oh, wait, I guess I shouldn’t do that. So, I guess I would just buy my parents a house and buy a bunch of fast cars. And I could buy Elon Musk a rocket. Yeah, I would buy Elon Musk a rocket.” When the judge pointed out that Elon Musk did not need a rocket, the student just replied that it would make him go down in history.

Ilinca Slabu, climb instructor, shared this after debate event: One of her students wanted to play a song on his cello. So, he did, but then, another student jumped in on the piano. This resulted in an impromptu concert after the debate round. This is not the only time Climb turned musical. Instructor Julie Badgley noted that in teaching students to add music to their PowerPoints in speech class, she demonstrated with a Lizzo song. All the students, with their cameras on, immediately started a surprise dance party!

## Seattle University Tournaments!

The SU tournaments are pretty big affairs—ranging in size from 80 to 400 participants. Students come from all over the Puget Sound plus China and British Columbia to join in for great competition. Jim, director at Seattle U, has increased the offerings at the tournaments, continuing to serve the middle school league but now with elementary and high school debate plus speaking events. Students have, depending on the weekend, the opportunity to participate online or in-person.

## Climb the Mountain 2022 Summer Camps



This summer Climb the Mountain hosted two amazing summer debate programs plus we brought back the speech programs! The programs ran for one week in July and one week in August. 195 new and experienced debaters, speakers, and coaches joined in. Students in elementary, middle, and high school participated.

Students learned all the skills you'd expect—strong argument and case building, refutation, rebuilding, question and answer/points of information, and weighing of issues.

Perhaps as important—students had time to socialize and connect with other students. Interacting with their peers, students learn so much working in teams toward a goal.

Coaches learned with the esteemed Sarah Sherry who showed them the ropes for recruiting, retention, instruction, attending tournaments, and so much more.

Jim led up the effort managing labs, tabulation, parent and student questions, staff instruction and support. And the entire thing went extremely well!

**We are climbing the mountain!**



## **Climb Highlights Sept. 2021 to Aug. 2022 . . .**

- Fall, Winter, and Spring, instructed 1000+ students in debate and speaking in our afterschool program.
- Held three online tournaments for college students.
- Did a major update to the Climb web pages.
- Initiated a new debate program with Woodridge elementary school in spring 2022.
- 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 7 middle school debate tournaments and a high school tournament at Seattle University with Climbers attending who won many awards. Jim also hosted 2 summer tournaments for elementary, middle school, and high school students.
- Jim as Climb Director, hosted 3 elementary, 1 speech tournament and 2 high school tournaments.
- Answered dozens of emails asking questions about speech and debate.
- Updated the national speech and debate contact list.
- Connected coaches to hire assistant coaches 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, is doing a major update to the tab program for the first time in 12 years providing multiple improvements that Jim has wanted incorporated including allowing the program to run in Windows 11 and Office 365/2021, continue to send email ballots, and to allow 3 and 4 debater teams (avoiding needing to add up points manually for each and every speaker!).
- Hosted the Climb debate camp online in July and August. Approximately 195 students and coaches participated.

**To get the latest news, be sure to check our Facebook page:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/258436737697090/>

**We are climbing with your help and support!**

## **Contribute to the Climb!**

**For anyone interested in helping us continue our mission, please visit <https://www.climbthemountain.us/support-us> to donate a gift of money or your time.**



## Donors keep us Climbing!

We are incredibly 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 June 2021 to November 2022). ***Did we miss you? We are very sorry for the omission and we want to correct it!*** Please email Jim at [jim@climbthemountain.us](mailto:jim@climbthemountain.us) and tell him. : )

### DONORS

- Alicia Hunt
- Bijan Marashi
- Brian and Nina Marshall
- Char Main and Chris Dunlap
- Denny Kwon
- Dr. David McKay
- Google matching
- Jared Phillips and Loan Lam
- Joseph Terry
- Mack Sermon
- Michael Bartanen
- Nordstrom matching
- Rowland Hobbs & Angelo Boccia Cedeño
- Sarah Peterson
- Satinder Haer
- Sean Collins
- Shari and David Barsky
- Stephen Reed
- Ted Prosize
- Tsongas Litigation Consulting Inc.
- West Coast Publishing
- Zach Maghirang

**Thank you to these great Climbers who volunteered help at our programs:**

Akshay Vakharia , Denise Vaughan , Ethan Luo , Brandon Luo , Dylan DeLeon , Amelie , Michi Okahata , Mike Bartanen , Ronna Liggett

**Thank you to all those who worked over the past year in ways that really helped Climb the Mountain including:**

Adilina Aguirre , Alex Cruz , Alex Lindgren-Ruby , Alyssa Gaston , Ayan Abdi , Beth Cole , Blakely Rudolph , Calvin Pittser , Christina Wardwell , Denise Vaughan , Derek Hanson , Edward Wei , Emerald Maple , Erin Phillips , Hafsa Abdi , Ilinca Slabu , Jennifer Stephens , Johnathan Venable , Julie Badgley , Kelsey Phifer , Lauren Fletcher , Mandi Wickline , Maya Garzelli , Mia Harris , Miriam Hardyway , Natalie Neumeier , Nico Roshau , Noor Sandhu , Parker Davidson , Peter/Pete Litster , Ronna Liggett , Sarah Tran , Sloane Goldberg , Thadeus Smith , Tyler Tremain , Tyler Durbin , Tyler Zabolio , Yves Martin.

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

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