



NEWSLETTER

Vol. 1, No.2, May 2016

Welcome to the Spring 2016 Climb Newsletter.

The Newsletter offers a glimpse into what we are doing and 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 Kate Hall who put the initial draft of the newsletter together and to all the participants that shared their experiences.

Enjoy and please feel free to contact me, Jim Hanson at jim@climbthemountain.us with ideas, edits, omissions, thoughts, etc.

Click on individual stories to read about Climb the Mountain!

Speech and Debate: Building and Growing	2
Reaching the Summit of Mt. Si High School	3
The Missing Salad!	3
BC Academy	4
Debate Sometimes Separates People from Their Pets	5
We the People	6
Niko makes it to the state championship!.....	7
Working with Middle School Debate	8
Climbing . . . Mount Vernon and Bellingham Host Clinics!	9
And Eastlake High School in Sammamish!	10
Northwest Parli Champs	10
The Board.....	11
September 2015 to May 2016 in Review	12
Contribute to the Climb!	13
Donors keep us Climbing!.....	13

Speech and Debate: Building and Growing

We see the headlines such as: “Debate program reduced as part of university budget cuts.” “Speech and debate program starts crowdfunding campaign after school district stops providing funds.” These stories directly and personally affect our community. It’s no longer just a program or two in a different town or region but instead programs in our cities and our states with decades of histories of changing students’ lives.

Even as these articles fill our inboxes, timelines and feeds, another type of story always surfaces, unchanging: “Debate increases critical thinking skills.” “Speech and debate programs prepare students for life after college.” “Debate increases admission chances.” (See examples from [Huffington Post](#) [Florida Sun Sentinel](#) [National Review](#).) We even hear of new programs in spite of the cuts to some programs, new students, and new opportunities to participate. As this happens, our students still find the same benefits speech and debate has provided for generations.

Today’s speech and debate students are tomorrow’s leaders in our workforce and our communities. They are students from diverse backgrounds with unique perspectives. They are the driving force to the future, a future in which we all learn a bit about those that surround us. Each moment we spend with these students, coaching and teaching and practicing and learning from them, we all grow together.



Climb camps and clinics are working to increase participation and provide access to great coaching at a very low cost. Most camps cost \$1,500 to \$7,000; our camps cost \$389, our clinics cost \$20 to \$35, and students with need have their fees waived.

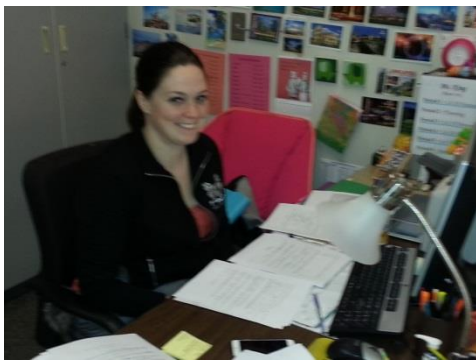
What can we do to preserve and connect our communities? Climb is working to address this question. We are working to provide training to students and coaches and judges. We’ve seen some great successes throughout the Northwest.

Climb has helped over 200 participants during the past year and we want to tell our story in this newsletter.

We are working this summer to setup a variety of projects to increase participation and the inescapable conclusion is that we need more leaders at schools to bring speech and debate to students. These leaders need more support. What can you do? Volunteer at speech and debate events—judge at a tournament, help with a practice session. Come together through foundations like Climb the Mountain to provide support for coaches, students and judges. And we can all take a moment, however brief it may be, to share a story, connect with an old colleague or competitor, and speak up for the speech and debate community.

Reaching the Summit of Mt. Si High School

Mt. Si High School Speech and Debate is a continuing success story of participation and excellence. Mount Si is a perfect example: their program has blossomed from 12 students to more than 60. Climb the Mountain came in to provide training for both new head coach Chelsea and her team.



Chelsea King has built up a growing and very successful program and her students participated in Climb clinics.

“Climb has been instrumental in helping build the Speech and Debate program at our school...Jim and Climb have been so helpful in all areas of developing our program from training for me, to camps, to additional training in new categories with students,” Chelsea said. “The willingness to guide me through this process and help students in a number of ways has improved our team immensely.”

Climb held a public forum debate and also an individual events clinic at Mt. Si High School.

Climb instructor Melanie Nadon served as an instructor at the Mount Si High School clinic for individual events, where she helped students polish speaking skills. “When spring rolls around, a lot of the same kids start coming to clinics or tournaments and so there is some overlap and you get to know them a little bit better each time you judge or teach them,” Melanie explained. “That becomes even more fun when the subject of a clinic is individual events since there is often a lot more room for the kids' personalities and interests to come out in those speeches than in debate. That being the case, the students at Mt. Si High School were a fun bunch for the clinic; they were all quite involved and motivated and it was clear how much they wanted to be there and how eager they were to learn.”

We've been so lucky to help be part of success for the Mount Si team and can't wait to watch them continue to climb!



Nick Mauer, our salad savior, helped our clinics.

The Missing Salad!

The clinic went well but as Jim drove to the high school, he realized: “I forgot the salad.” Most clinics hosted by Climb feature snacks, pizza, and a fresh salad. Jim would not hear of missing the salad. So, within minutes, he put into action a plan: Call Nick Mauer! Initially Nick was hesitant. Jim responded clearly: “We must have salad.” Nick took up the effort and went to the store and got the salad. The lettuce crisis was averted.

BC Academy

Our work with debaters from BC Academy is a story in which students become speakers and debaters who succeed not only in tournaments but also in making connections. These hardworking students are doing some amazing things. Led by excellent director David Jung, this program is making a difference in bringing speech and debate to students. Instructors from Climb had a chance to spend time with its debaters throughout the 2015-16 year, and our time together made an impact as much on us as on the students. Students told us our workshops helped them feel more comfortable in debate rounds and increased their self-confidence.



Serena Fitzgerald, Dylan Thomas, and Jim Hanson help students including Ellen Kim, Woojin Lim, and Helen Huang.

“Climb the Mountain helped me a lot with my speaking style and how to engage in debate,” BC Academy debater Ellen Kim said. “It made me confident when I am speaking and be in charge in the debate round.”

Helen Huang, another debater at BC Academy, shared with us that what she’s learned in debate this year means just as much once the tournament ends.

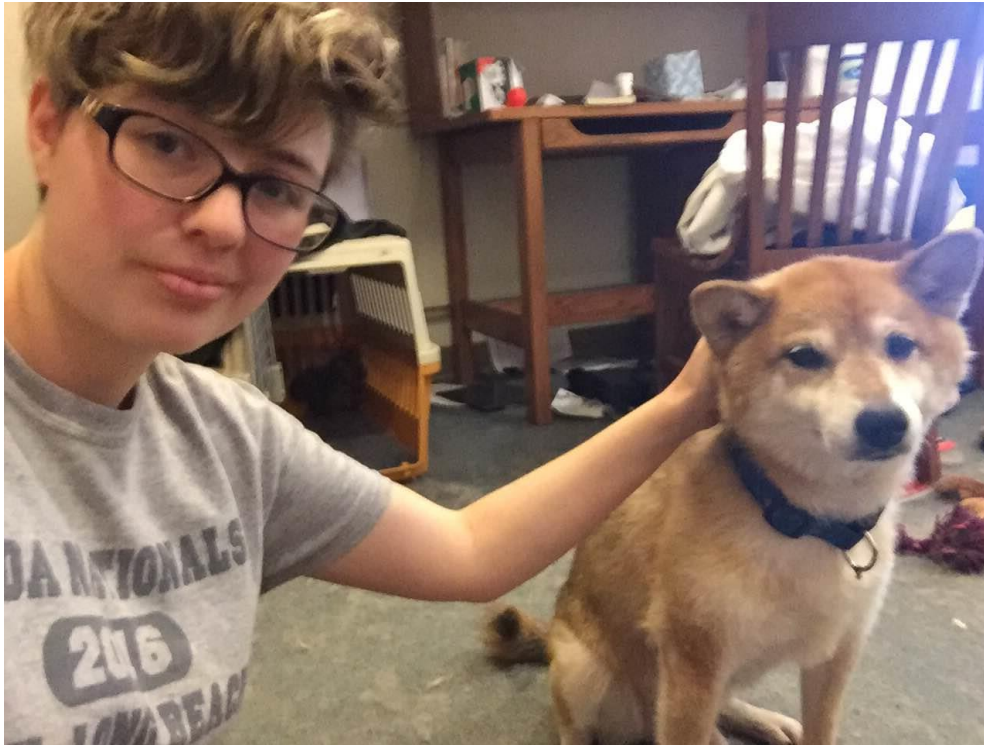
I guess debate has been a pretty big impact on me this year. By going to so many different tournaments and universities, it has given me a glimpse of what debate is like. Thanks to debate, I feel more confident in what I argue for and I am confident about my voice now...Overall, doing debate has not only given me confidence in myself, but I've been blessed with a loving community of friends.

Fellow debater Woojin Lim credited Climb the Mountain and the opportunity to attend workshop sessions as a critical factor in his success in national debate competitions—including his first place showing at the Stanford Invitational.

The coaches were extremely friendly and helpful, providing me with amazing debate and public speaking advice! They were very knowledgeable in their fields of expertise, and provided numerous tips on researching, case building, strategies to consider, and constructive in-round feedback. My debate skills soared significantly after their workshop sessions, which were also very useful in providing background information and argument ideas for topics ranging from minority rights to international relations. Our debate society has greatly benefited from Jim and his team’s great dedication in coaching debate. Not only has this organization improved my debate skills in competing and winning nationally, but also helped me as a person.

Our work with BC Academy and the testimony of their debaters fits perfectly with our mission: supporting and connecting the debate community.

Debate Sometimes Separates People from Their Pets



Serena Fitzgerald and her beloved Burton!

Serena Fitzgerald has worked at several clinics, receiving rave reviews for her leadership and instruction. She competed in high school and still competes in college. Through it all, she still has a great love for her dog, Burton. She recently wrote about what it is like to have a pet and to compete:

I went to nationals this year, which was in California and required me to be separated from my dog for about five days. Throughout the trip I wouldn't stop showing my teammates pictures of him on my phone because I missed him, and when I finally got back he wouldn't stop following me around the house. Even when I just went to get a snack from the kitchen, he'd follow me to make sure I wasn't leaving again.

When you have been involved in speech and debate with a pet . . . how do you handle the separation? care issues? etc.? Email Jim Hanson at jim@climbthemountain.us and tell him. We'll work to include your answer in the next newsletter.

We the People . . .

Jim has helped out with a program designed to get students to learn about, prepare for, and communicate on the American Constitution. Students work in groups of four or five and answer questions about unwarranted searches, free speech, and corporation rights, among many current and historical issues.



Gretchen Wulfin, outstanding teacher at Tahoma High School, has led her We the People team to great success.

Second picture from Navyatha I 23 at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:We_the_people_~.jpg

Jim edited essays on such subjects including gun rights, slavery and the 13th amendment, immigration rights, and other issues. He then engaged students in practice sessions providing feedback for improvement.

Gretchen had this to say about her experience:

We just returned from We the People Nationals in Washington DC where Tahoma High School earned 9th place in the entire nation! Given that we were competing against the best team from each state – it was a huge accomplishment for us. I wanted to thank you for being part of the students' success and working with Tahoma High School's We the People students. Even though our subjects are very diverse, your mastery of each was impressive. In particular, I am so grateful to you for working with students on improving their writing. Through your able guidance students improved their writing ability by learning to specifically and clearly answer the prompt incorporating very relevant examples. In addition, the hours you spent actually coming into class and teaching the students' to improve their speaking styles was very powerful. The invaluable tools you have passed on to them - they will use not only in college, but for the rest of their lives.

Jim expressed his enthusiasm for the Tahoma program as well as We the People.

Students learn to present themselves, to respond effectively to questions—often very difficult questions—and to learn about our history and our government. Gretchen is a wonderful teacher and the program she has developed is inspiring. It was an honor to work with her and her fantastically talented students.

Kudos to all of the Tahoma participants in this great event. This is yet another way in which students can engage themselves in speaking about important issues.

Niko makes it to the state championship!



Niko Battle winning state bid.

As part of Jim's work with the debate community—he has worked with a number of individual students. One of those students is Niko Battle and we thought we'd just let his words speak for themselves:

My name is Niko Battle; I am a freshman Lincoln Douglas debater at Mariner High School. As I started this season I had no coach, no team and no money. On top of that (as if that wasn't enough); I was new to the Washington state circuit and this was my first year in open-level debate. The only thought going through my mind was: "What the am I gonna do?" After finding a sponsor at my high school, I restarted our debate club. As for coaching, it turns out a family friend who used to do debate sympathized with my situation and encouraged me to speak to Mr. Hanson. That was the best decision I could have made for my debate career. Mr. Hanson genuinely cared about me and my success as a debater. He worked with me at no charge. He helped me prepare for tournaments and with his help I made it to state as a freshman. That was one of my major goals and I could not have accomplished it without his help. Thanks Mr. Hanson! Thanks Climb the Mountain!

Jim worked with Niko providing evidence and drove to Everett on a number of occasions for practice and argument strategy discussion. He noted:

Niko is an incredibly talented young debater. He has a very bright future in the activity and it has been a privilege to work with him. It is also very cool to me that he is related to one of the first debaters I ever coached, Jeff Pearson (who was featured in our first newsletter). The family of debate keeps thriving.

Kudos to Niko and to all the students who are at schools without established programs but who are seeking the opportunity to express themselves—to participate in speech and debate.

Working with Middle School Debate

We started the new year off with a resolution to make a difference in the Puget Sound debate community, and kept it with a middle school clinic January 23, 2016 at Explorer West Middle School in Seattle, Wash. Thanks to the efforts of Jon Howland, Explorer West teacher and coach, and former UPS debater and coach, we were ready to go.

The clinic welcomed fifteen Explorer West Middle School students and ten students from five additional area schools – Bush, Overlake, Evergreen, Seattle Country Day, and Soundview—to a weekend of preparation for the final debate competition of the season. “Dozens of students attended; under the instruction of an elite group of lab leaders, students pushed their critical thinking, research, and public speaking skills forward,” Jon Howland said. “The kids left happy, feeling more confident about their chances at the next competition.”



Jessica Gates, Eric Suni, Jon Howland, and Melanie Nadon joined in to instruct middle schoolers in Seattle.

Joining Jon and Jim were: Jessica Gates, Seattle attorney at Russell Investments and former amazing UPS debater; and Eric Suni, Information Specialist, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research and former outstanding Whitman debater; and Melanie Nadon, Masters candidate at Evans School of Public Policy and Governance and former well known University of La Verne debater. As part of the clinic, students broke into labs to review arguments about police body cameras and STEM education and tested out new strategies and arguments in practice debates.

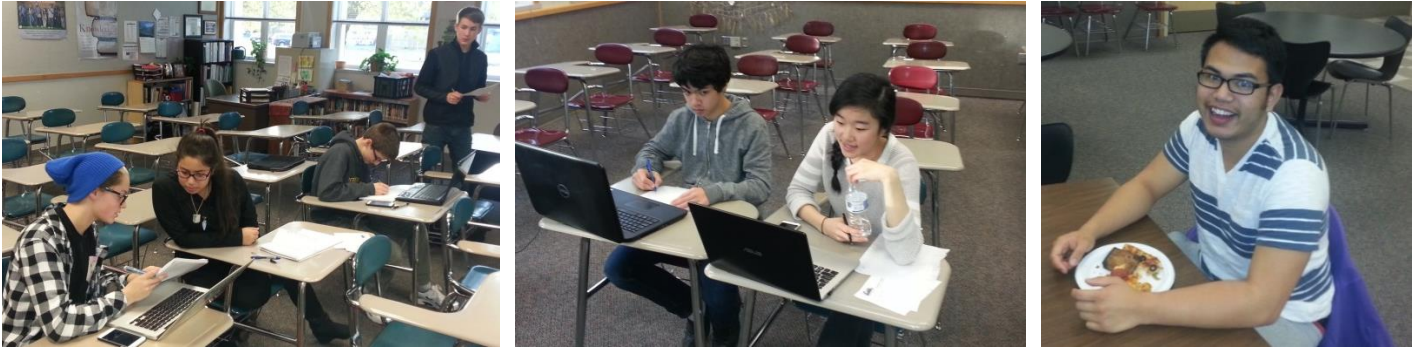


The students give the “thumbs up” to the clinic, enthusiastically noting how it helped their skills. They liked the pizza too.

“It was a lot of fun to work with the students and help them to better understand how to build an argument and how to structure arguments and evidence in order to give more persuasive speeches,” lab leader Eric Suni told us. A special thanks from us at Climb the Mountain to Jon Howland, Melanie Nadon, Eric Suni and Jessica Gates for being such an important part of this clinic!

Climbing . . . Mount Vernon and Bellingham Host Clinics!

The number of students in speech and debate programs in Puget Sound continues to climb, and we joined Mount Vernon and Bellingham high schools led by Kelly Kirkpatrick and Laura Livingston—two great coaches—to help guide them up the mountain.



Students at the Bellingham Clinic. Kenny Torre (picture on the right) served as one of the excellent instructors at the clinic.

A group of Mount Vernon students joined us last year at our first Climb the Mountain speech and debate summer camp, and we had the chance to work with them and other students from the program at our Mount Vernon clinic. At the Bellingham clinic, we were joined by students from Bellingham, Ferndale, Orcas Island, and Mariner high schools.

“Climb The Mountain has provided valuable assistance for our growing program,” Mount Vernon coach Kelly Kirkpatrick said. “Our students took advantage of the affordable institute last summer; small classes with fantastic instruction and plenty of individual attention made for a valuable camp experience... we will be sending more students this year! Additionally, we hosted a Climb The Mountain Clinic at our school during the season. The instructors were eager to help my young students and provided mentoring and support for the entire season.”

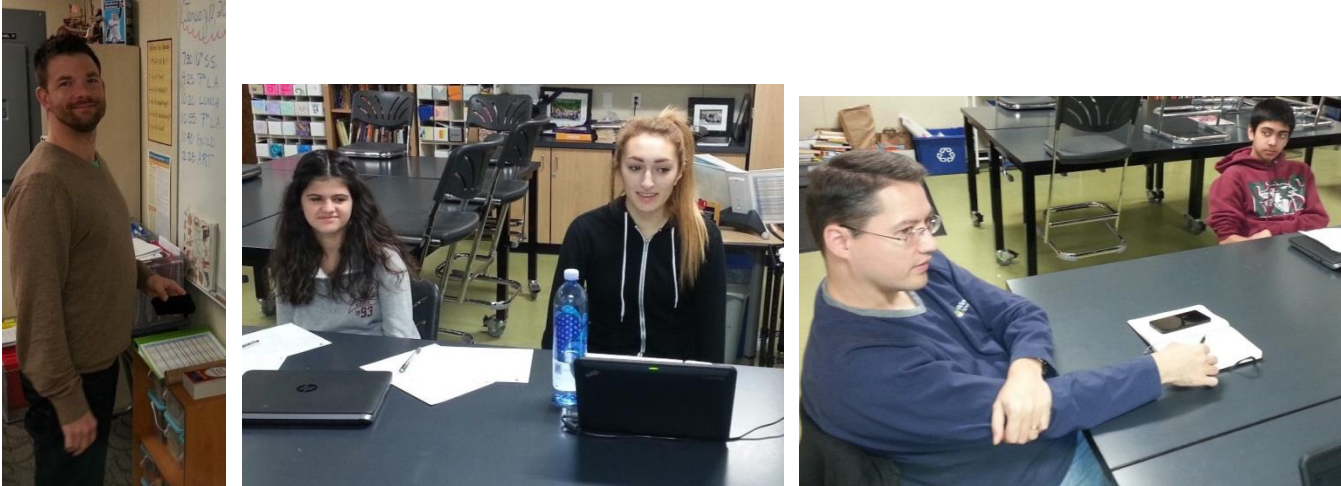


Students at the Mt. Vernon Clinic. Carly Johnson (right) served as an instructor and clinic manager, and she even debated students!

We look forward to seeing the Bellingham and Mount Vernon speakers and debaters again, and we hope to see you and your debaters with us as well.

And Eastlake High School in Sammamish!

We also held two great clinics at Eastlake High School. The program is building and growing with Todd Bohannon leading students to great success. Go Eastlake!



Todd Bohannon (left), two Eastlake debaters (center), and another debater with Steve Rowe, Climb instructor, former debater coached by Jim and currently Interlake High School head coach (right). John Julian and Jessica Jiang also helped out at the clinics—making for helpful and educational instruction to students!

Want to host a clinic at your middle or high school? Contact Executive Director Jim Hanson at jim@climbthemountain.us

Northwest Parli Champs



Jim was proud of Emily Merrill and Serena Fitzgerald's first place finish at the Northwest Parliamentary Debate Championship (a tournament hosted by Climb the Mountain to grow the college circuit.). Jim coached Emily when she was at Bellevue College and Serena works with Jim at Climb the Mountain clinics.

The Board

The Climb Board is five highly accomplished professionals who strongly believe in the value of speech and debate.



Jared Phillips

Mr. Phillips is the Chief Executive Officer and Treasurer of the Foundation, handling many of the business functions of Climb the Mountain. Mr. Phillips has been a nationally recognized All-American debater (placing thirty-third in the nation), coach of the 17th team in the nation, and placed in late elimination rounds at multiple Northwest debate tournaments. He is currently the Co-Founder and CEO of Minutes.City, a company focused on improving civic engagement of citizens with local government.



Jim Hanson

As the Executive Director, Mr. Hanson is responsible for the instructional creation and organization of the Foundation. Mr. Hanson has been a Professor of Rhetoric and Argument and speech and debate coach for more than thirty-three years. As coach, his speech and debate team won 5 squad NDPA national championships, first place CEDA team in the nation (Jessica Clarke and Adam Symonds), first place NDT speaker (Charles Olney), and first place NPDA speaker (Miranda Morton) as well as over 1000 debate awards and 500 individual speaking events awards.



Char Main

Ms. Main serves as Vice President of the Foundation and provides organizational goals and objectives advice. She is a litigation attorney with a nationwide practice, and she oversees the work of litigators across the country. She is formerly a nationally competitive speaker and debater (placing fifth in the nation at CEDA Nationals and second in the nation at Pi Kappa Delta Nationals), an "All American" debater, and placed first and was awarded first speaker at many Northwest debate contests. In law school, Ms. Main was a finalist and coach in national moot court competitions. She has coached at both high school and college levels, leading multiple teams to elimination debates.



Rowland Hobbs

Mr. Hobbs serves as a board member, providing expertise in promotion and development. He is a nationally recognized, award-winning, product designer, marketer, and advisor to leaders of global organizations. He is currently managing director at Teneo, a global CEO advisory firm. Previously, he was product design director at Accenture, board member at Firelight Foundation, founder and board member at Post+Beam, and was a nationally competitive debater advancing to elimination rounds at CEDA Nationals and the NFL National championship, placing ninth at the Heart of America, and earning first speaker in Washington State.



David Perry

Mr. Perry serves as Secretary recording meeting minutes and compiling Foundation documents. He is an award winning legal counsel for a business, a nationally competitive speaker and debater in both parliamentary and policy debate including elimination debates at national championship tournaments (placing fifth at the DSR National Championship).

September 2015 to May 2016 in Review . . .

As we reflect upon the first year of Climb and its successes, we want to highlight key happenings:

September 2015:

- At BC Academy: clinic providing instruction in public forum debate.
- WSFA Meeting: Jim meets with some of the coaches although an early end to the meeting and delays in getting the food meant Jim arrived after near the end of the meeting.
- Climb hosts the Northwest Parliamentary Debate Warmup—successful and well-fed tournament!
- Jim gives special lecture to Mt. Si students on the kinds of individual events they can do. This helps Mt. Si begin their IE program.

October 2015:

- Climb hosts the First Climb the Mountain fundraising dinner. Loan Lam and Jared Phillips provide a very delicious meal. The dinner raised well over \$1,500 for our foundation.
- Climb holds the Mt. Si Clinic for public forum debate. Helps beginner students get a kick-start debating.
- Climb holds the Bellingham high school Clinic., working with students in public forum debate, and Policy-CX debate.
- Jim works with Pacific Lutheran University and Puyallup High School doing IE tab at their jointly-held tournament.

November 2015:

- At BC Academy: clinic providing instruction in public forum debate.
- Jim begins projects expanding national speech and debate contact list, projects to develop programs to promote speech and debate to teaching certification programs and to middle schools and high schools.

December 2015:

- Climb hosts the Tacoma Community College debate tournament—providing much needed debate for younger debaters.
- Climb holds the Eastlake High School clinic providing instruction in Congress, IEs, and public forum debate.
- At BC Academy, clinic providing instruction in public forum debate.
- Observation and promotion of debate at the Bush School middle school parliamentary debate.
- Begin working with Niko in Everett, Washington.
- Begin working with We the People in Maple Valley, Washington.

January 2016:

- Jim works with the University of Puget Sound doing IE tab for their high school tournament.
- Jim gives lecture at the University of Washington Tacoma lauding the importance of debate. The class Jim spoke to was Ben Meiches' class—Ben was a national champion debater who was on Jim's team and is now an esteemed and promising young professor.
- Jim assists with Mt. Si's LD debaters who are beginning to debate in LD debate.
- Climb holds Eastlake High School clinic providing instruction in IEs, Congress, and public forum debate.
- Climb holds Explorer West Middle School clinic providing training in middle school parliamentary debate.

February through May 2016:

- Jim begins work at PLU helping with their BP-Worlds debate program.
- Climb hosts Northwest Parliamentary debate championship tournament.
- Jim continues to work with Niko, Mt. Si, and PLU.
- Jim meets with middle school teachers for discussion about future plans for their organization.
- Jim updates and completes Climb accounting for the 2015 year.
- Jim completes the NDT Ranking Report.
- Jim works with BC Academy's middle school debaters and speakers.
- Climb begins project to develop instructional materials for new coaches—led up by Kathryn Starkey.
- Climb completes drafts of new comprehensive national speech and debate contact list and of middle school and high school teachers and activity directors and vice-principals. Thanks to Kathryn Starkey, Beverly Hanson, and Satinder Haer for their work on this.
- Climb begins work with Robert Crenshaw on grant proposals for Climb.

In our Next Newsletter, we will tell you about our upcoming highlights:

- Yes we have another 2 camps coming up. Yes we are set to have another set of October clinics. Yes we are going to begin our outreach to administrators and teaching certification programs. News on these is coming . . . In the meantime, see our Facebook pages . . . <https://www.facebook.com/groups/258436737697090/>
- **A huge amount of growth in our second year, with plenty more to come.**

Contribute to the Climb!

For anyone interested in helping us continue our mission, please visit

<http://www.climbthemountain.us/donate.htm> to donate money or

<http://www.climbthemountain.us/how-you-can-help.htm> to read the different ways you can volunteer your time.

Donors keep us Climbing!

We are incredibly grateful for the support of so many people even though we have just begun our official fundraising. 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 up to June 1, 2016). *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. :)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David and Shari Barsky • Bob Withycombe • Char Main and Chris Dunlap • David Jung • Emily Cordo • Eric Suni • Jessica Clarke • Jessica Gates and JJ Howland • John Henry Heckendorn • John Julian | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jose Trejo • Joseph Terry • Megan Salzman Medica and John Kevin Medica (The Salzman-Medica Family Fund) • Microsoft Corporation • Mike Bartanen • Mike King and Nancy Neraas • Satinder Haer and Ryan Flood • Steve and Sara Rowe |
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We are climbing the mountain!

