Mount Hood Climb Service Day
by The Reverend C. Phillip Craig Jr., Head Chaplain

The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit.
—Nelson Henderson

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.
—Anne Frank

While these ideals daily resonate throughout the Oregon Episcopal School experience, nowhere is the blend more profound than each year on the second Wednesday of May. Indeed, this day is a part of the core and fabric of our school, and it is known as our Mount Hood Climb Service Day. Mount Hood Climb Service Day was established with a clear and hope-filled purpose. The school community was seeking a thoughtful manner by which to annually observe and appropriately remember the Mount Hood Climb tragedy, which occurred in May of 1986, taking the lives of nine members of our community. Twenty-five years later, this day of service has matured into an invaluable tradition and one of our finest all-school endeavors.

This year, Mount Hood Climb Service Day will take place on May 11, 2011. As is our custom, it will begin with an all-school chapel service around the OES Belltower. Over one thousand people, young and old, will gather to give thanks for our life as a community and to pause for a moment of silence to honor and remember those individuals lost during the Mount Hood Climb. After an enthusiastic commissioning from Interim Head of School Kathy Layendecker, students and faculty from all divisions will leave to take part in an extensive range of service activities, all designed to thank the broader Portland community for the support the school received during May of 1986. Many other members of the OES family—staff, trustees, parents and alumnae/i—will take part in this day. For the first time this year, alumnae/i across the country (and the world) also will be invited to connect with our school and “join in spirit” on their own day of service.

Locally, over 50 agencies will benefit from the hands-on presence of OES ambassadors. In addition, blended-age groups will dedicate themselves to environmental and sustainability projects here on our campus, in and around our gardens, woods, and wetlands. The OES mission statement calls on all of us to consider our “power for good.” We are blessed as a school community to maintain a constant conversation around the opportunities and the responsibilities that come with that power. The Mount Hood Climb Service Day remains a signature moment to highlight and celebrate that conversation.

We invite you to join us for this special occasion. For more information on Mount Hood Climb Service Day (including all Portland area events), feel free to contact Head Chaplain Phillip Craig (503.768.3138 or craigp@oes.edu). For non-local opportunities to “join in spirit,” please contact Alumnae/i Relations Associate Tammy Armstrong (503.416.9374 or alumni@oes.edu). Wherever you may find yourself on May 11, 2011, please keep Mount Hood Climb Service Day, and the families of Oregon Episcopal School (past and present), in your thoughts and prayers.

SERVICE

Upper School students and faculty installed birdhouses at the Ronald McDonald House near Legacy Emanuel Medical Center. Lower and Middle School students and parents built the birdhouses, and staff members delivered them to the facility.

On facing page, a student is shown at Ronald McDonald House putting up a birdhouse. Another student works with a retirement home resident on a memoir the man wrote.

Top row: Upper School students prepared and served meals for elderly people, made furniture for a nonprofit organization, and helped Lower School students build birdhouses.

Second row, Middle School students sorted and delivered food donations for Oregon Food Bank.

At left, members of an Upper School singing group entertained residents at a retirement home.

More photos of Aardvarks in action on the web.