

# ain't no mountain **HIGH** enough

## CLIMBING CLUB MEMBERS LOVE GETTING THEIR PIECE OF THE ROCK

While we all strive to make it to the top figuratively, the Climbing Club members literally make it to the top every time they get together. Whether they joined the club to hang out with Sponsor **Eric Wydeven** or to perfect their climbing skills, members challenged themselves on and off the rock.

The Climbing Club was a group of students from all grades who got together and climbed every Thursday at the North Austin Rock Gym. The members said they really enjoyed spending their Thursdays warming up on the easier rock courses and then moving on to the more challenging rocks.

**"I love how I have to think about which way is the best way to climb up."**

Freshman **Piper Wiest** was inspired to start rock climbing by her brother, senior **Willis Wiest**.  
 "My brother joined the club, and I just started going with him," Wiest said. "I found that climbing was something that I really liked."  
 For senior **John Carson**, rock climbing was a large part of his

high school experience.

"I started around the end of freshman year," Carson said. "My friend was in the club and invited me. It's stuck ever since."

This year, freshman **Rory Thomas** got back into rock climbing after a long hiatus.

"Fourth grade was when I started," Thomas said. "I did it for a few years and then took a break, but when I saw that there was a club here, I thought that I should start it again."

Climbing Club attracted students for different reasons, but members usually stayed because for the same reason: everyone genuinely loved the physical and mental challenge rock climbing provided.

"For indoor rock climbing, I love how I have to think about which way is the best way to climb up," Carson said.

Even if the Climbing Club hasn't climbed any actual mountains (yet), the members still dream about getting to the top of some of the biggest mountains.

"I've always wanted to climb at Yosemite," Carson said, "so there would be cool. Or Fitzroy, that's in Patagonia. It's a really cool mountain."



1. Senior **Willis Wiest** free climbs a wall at the South Austin Rock Gym during the club's weekly gathering. "Early on, when I was younger, I would always climb things," Wiest said. "When I was a freshman, I found out that I could do [rock climbing] as a P.E. credit, and so I took the OCP class at the Austin Rock Gym and I've been climbing ever since." Photo by *Hannah Ilan*.  
 2. Belayed by adviser **Eric Wydeven**, senior **Summer Stewart** scales the Greenbelt as the Climbing Club took full advantage of a gorgeous February Sunday in Austin. Photo by *Madison Olsen*.  
 3. Senior **John Carson** and sponsor **Eric Wydeven** converse between climbs. Photo by *Madison Olsen*.  
 4. Seniors **Summer Stewart** and **Sierra Moore** pose for a picture next to the climbing rope before they take on the rock course. "I love the community of our club," Moore said, "I just love how I can go and hang out with all the people." Photo by *Hannah Ilan*.

**VIVA LA MEXICO**  
 Invited by the Mexican Consulate, Ballet Folklorico dancers **Aileen Benitez**, **Patricia Henderson** and **Iris Perez** perform at SXSW on March 15. Photo courtesy of *Juana Gun*.



**TWO IS BETTER THAN ONE**  
 Sophomores **Jenny Peña** and **Carlos Rivas** perform a dance together. "I don't normally go out much, but since I've been in Ballet Folklorico kind of helped me get out more," Rivas said. Photo courtesy of *Juana Gun*.

**BIG SKIRT, DON'T CARE**  
 Junior **Natalia Alvarado** feels that being in Ballet Folklorico has boosted her confidence. "Being in Ballet Folklorico makes me feel better about myself, and I like feeling that way," Alvarado said. Photo courtesy of *Juana Gun*.

## DANCE to your own drum

### BALLET FOLKLORICO INSPIRES CONFIDENCE

As McCallum's biggest cultural dancing group, Ballet Folklorico's style of dancing was enjoyed by everyone.

For some members, Ballet Folklorico was a tradition passed down from older generations. Freshman **Crystal Suarez**'s family introduced her to the style of dance when she was young.

"My family has a history at McCallum, and they all have been in Ballet Folklorico," Suarez said. "I've always liked the music since I was little because of my grandpa."

Other members of the club joined because of their friends. Sophomore **Cheyenne Keeler** was introduced to Ballet Folklorico by one of her peers.

"One of my friends was already in the club and asked me to join," Keeler said, "so I ended up doing it, and I liked it ever since."

Ballet Folklorico was not only about good music and dancing, but for some it was about conquering their fears.

"You could never get me on a stage before," senior **Patricia Henderson** said, "but once I did, I felt that I could do anything, and it was an amazing feeling."

Equally amazing, the group was chosen to perform the opening number at the Pan American Student Forum in San Antonio and was asked by the Mexican Consulate to perform at SXSW in March.

Although these were crowning achievements for the group, the Ballet Folklorico community was open to dancers of all skill and experience levels.

"It's so fun," Keeler said, "Even if your dancing isn't as refined as some of the other people [in the group], they will always stop and help you work through the problems that you are having. It's really nice and makes me feel glad to be in such a great community of people who all love to dance."

**"I've always liked the music since I was little because of my grandpa."**