



Photo by Karen Fliedner, OCF

Mount Yale is one of the several 14ers that participants climb as a part of Spring Canyon's Rocky Mountain High leadership program.

Race to the summit—extreme challenge

by **COLONEL R. MICHAEL TESDAHL**
United States Army, Retired

Turning southwest at the only stoplight in Buena Vista, Colorado, we cross the last of the high plateau and enter the canyon. In folds of familiarity, the result of earlier pilgrimages, the land tightens around us, Mount Princeton and Mount Yale on our shoulders pressing us toward our destination. The sign: "Welcome Home."

Three days later: 3:30 a.m., high base camp at 11,500 feet. Twelve hardy souls emerge from tents into the frigid air of a mountain so high and so massive that it creates its own weather system. A fast, cold breakfast snack and we turn our faces upward; we'll need to beat the afternoon electrical storms. This is peak day, the day of the ascent of one of Colorado's mighty "14ers." The tree line falls behind. Crosswinds work against footing and balance. Breathing is

difficult. Put your game face on.

"The Trek," the climb of a 14er, is the quintessential experience of Rocky Mountain High, the capstone leadership development program at OCF's Spring Canyon Conference Center. Cleo "Buck" Buxton, OCF's first general secretary, understood the need for lay training to prepare for Christian witness and believed that summer training programs were essential to the work of OCF. OCF's conference center legacy was born.

In the first week of August this year, twelve teams will complete this extreme challenge. Why would they do this? Each team is committed to raising \$25,000 for the Spring Canyon phase of OCF's Growing and Building Campaign. Their common goal is to collectively bring \$250,000 to the campaign, virtually guaranteeing that construction on the first of two new lodges can begin this fall.

How can you get involved?

- ✓ **Become a team captain.** Captains are both climbers and fundraisers, actually making the ascent, finding donors from within their own circle of influence, recruiting teammates, and shepherding the team toward its fundraising objective.
- ✓ **Become a team member.** Not everyone can make the climb, but the climb will not be successful without you. Each captain needs two team members to shoulder a portion of the fundraising responsibility, to establish prayer support, and to maintain the momentum of the main effort.
- ✓ **Become a sponsor.** If you can't participate in the actual climb or as a member of a fundraising team, watch for opportunities to support your favorite team with a pledge or a one-time gift. ✈️

For more information and to get involved, contact COL Mike Tesdahl, USA (Ret.) at (303) 761-1984 or mike.tesdahl@ocfusa.org.

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Published six times a year, February, April, June, August, October, and December, by Officers' Christian Fellowship of the United States of America, 3784 South Inca Street, Englewood, Colorado 80110-3405. Distributed free to OCF members and some military agencies. Subscription price for others is \$20 per year, \$30 for two years, \$40 for three years. Periodicals postage paid at Englewood, Colorado, and at additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send address changes to Command at 3784 South Inca Street, Englewood, CO 80110-3405.

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Home office address: OCF®, 3784 S. Inca St., Englewood, CO 80110-3405
OCF website: www.ocfusa.org Phone: 303-761-1984 Fax: 303-761-6226
Toll Free 800-424-1984 e-mail: ocfdenver@ocfusa.org

Publisher/Editor: Michael Edwards, e-mail: Michael.Edwards@ocfusa.org
Associate Editor: Karen Fliedner, e-mail: karen.fliedner@ocfusa.org
Web and Graphic Designer: Josh Jackson, e-mail: josh.jackson@ocfusa.org

On the cover and on page 6: Watercolor illustrations by Andrew C. Jackson of Mobile, Alabama