

Commemorating World Polio Day at UVU Through Student Engaged Learning.

On Wednesday, October 23rd, 2019, Utah Valley University students had the honor and privilege of helping Orem Rotary club, in conjunction with UVU Rotaract, to host an event to commemorate World Polio Day. Rotaract is a student division of Rotary International (RI). RI is a global organization that promotes community service and getting members involved in their communities through leadership programs and service. With over 10,000 clubs and nearly 250,000 members, Rotaract sees its influence affect 184 countries worldwide.



Dr. John Hanrahan, President of Utah Rotary presentation at UVU

I had the unique opportunity of being able to “table” for this event, while also helping to prepare and set up the event. “Tabling” is almost exactly what it sounds like, I sat at a table in the hallway in UVU and tried to raise awareness for this event and answered any questions about Rotaract goals and its program to eradicate polio. This opportunity was my favorite, because I am

a strong believer in learning by teaching, which is fundamental to the theory of student engaged learning. I was also able to set up logistics for this event and through team effort to contribute to its successful hosting by the Rotaract club.

During the main event, we were able to listen to the presentation of Dr. John Hanrahan, who is the President of the Rotary International branch in Utah. He spoke about main goals of the RI since its founding at the beginning of the 20th century and how this organization was able to lead efforts global on eradication of polio.

Polio, or poliovirus, is an infectious disease that is spread through contaminated water, particularly feces. A major disease throughout the late 19th century and early 20th, a polio vaccine developed in the 1950's led many to believe that it had been eradicated. In developed countries the disease has been fully eradicated. In fact, as I tabled for this event, there were several people who were surprised to see polio signs and asked me why we were raising awareness for a disease that has been eradicated. I myself believed the disease to be nonexistent up until a few weeks ago. After the vaccine was developed, developed countries almost immediately defeated the spread of the disease. However, in developing countries, they lacked the resources and education to fight polio. In 1988, there were still 350,000 cases of wild polio. That number has decreased, and in 2013 the World Health Organization predicted that the diseases would be eradicated by 2018. But in 2018, there were still nearly 160 cases of polio, and they were limited to the countries of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Our goal is to raise awareness about this issue, and hopefully finally eradicate the Poliovirus.

The event was very interesting and inspiring: my colleagues and I learned a lot about both RI and polio eradication. And all of this happened thanks to UVU student engaged learning....

Caleb Stowell, Rotaract member