

Statement

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The President Elect of Midvalley Club

Utah's Rotary International District 5420

Incoming General Secretary for Big West Rotaract 2023-2027

67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Parallel event

“Empowering Mountain Women through Inclusive Student-engaged Learning Educational Initiative”

March 6, 2022

Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Stephanie Velasco, the *President Elect of Midvalley Club* of Utah's Rotary International District 5420 *and Incoming General Secretary for Big West Rotaract 2023-2027*. For over 110 years, Rotary International has been made of people who unite and take action to create lasting change, both in themselves, their community and globally. Rotaract is the Collegiate age and above chapters of Rotary International. Together, they focus on seven initiatives, including education. Within recent years, Rotary has further this initiative through furthering including students of all ages in empowering them to be full-fledged members. One way is through Student-engaged learning or SEL. SEL encourages students, both traditional and non-traditional, to inclusively work as a group to solve real-world problems, with faculty serving as mentors. Rotaract clubs, in particular, are not limited by age or gender, and work in tandem with Rotary clubs and community members to address the needs of individual communities.

During my time within Rotary and Rotaract over the last 13 years, I have been able to travel and partner with others of the same like mind and want to create more SEL opportunities around the world.

Another project that I would like to discuss is a Rotary International Friendship Exchange. Friendship Exchanges vary from country to country, creating opportunities to serve communities in the areas of water, health and education projects, through the experience of friendship and cultural exchange.

In 2022, specifically districts 4100 of Northern Mexico and district 5420 Utah USA. Together we created a difference from the social norm. We were able to empower 37 individuals among them were 7 Past District Governors that have represented the state of Utah since 1999 to 2023, 14 Utah Rotary Clubs, 1 Northern Mexico Rotary club, 1 Utah Rotaract club, and 1 central Mexico club. We toured 712 miles total for 1 week, although we accomplished so much more.

During our week in Northern Mexico, we were able to accomplish the following. We began with a focus of the environment, a beach cleanup over 5 miles long. In attention and interest of health through the local population we restored the Hemodialysis Center. Provided over 200 vaccinations to children and adults in five impoverish areas of the town together with the Health Department approval and guidance, including the Polio vaccine. Through our community focus we restored the local Water plant and providing over 1100 meals for the community

Since attending LEAD and Rotary International's Friendship Exchange, I have followed up with those who were on my team and on the exchange. They have become friends, teachers, doctors, engineers, social workers, leaders in their community, and peace workers for a better tomorrow. This was possible because of the impact of those who participate in a nonprofit service organization and because of the mentors among us in our schools and in our lives.