

Building Compassion Through Service: Hygiene Kits for Those in Need

On Monday, October 13, 2025. I had the opportunity to participate in a service-learning activity organized by the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of students' clubs at Utah Valley University. The event was a Hygiene Kits Service Project, where we worked together to assemble hygiene kits for men and women in need within our community. The project was presided over by Janessa Michelle Purcell, the President of the UIMF. Under her direction and leadership, our team collaborated with great enthusiasm and teamwork to complete the task efficiently and on time from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.



Group Photo of UVU Students assembling hygiene kits during the UIMF Service Project on October 13, 2025

During the project, I worked with my peers Erynn Lammi, Natalia Figueora, Abby Fisher, Daiana Justiniano, Alexander Woltjen, Roland Kabongo, Louyoko Nianza, among other UIMF members. Together, we prepared hygiene kits that included shampoo, shaving gel, toothpaste, toothbrushes, body wash, and other essential personal care items. Each member of the group took responsibility for assembling specific items, and we made sure that every kit was neatly packed and ready for distribution. The activity not only emphasized teamwork but also reminded us of the importance of serving those who lack basic daily necessities.



UVU Students assembling hygiene kits during the UIMF Service Project.

The Hygiene Kits Service Project reflected the Student Engaged Learning (SEL) Model. Which emphasizes learning by doing and applying classroom concepts to real-world experiences. Through this model, I was able to develop leadership, teamwork, and organizational skills. By participating in this service activity, I experienced firsthand how service can foster empathy and civic responsibility while building a sense of community among UVU students. This project also allowed us to engage with the broader goals of UIMF, which include humanitarian service, community engagement, and advocacy for sustainable development of many other services coming soon.

Participating in this project taught me valuable lessons about collective impact, how small individual efforts can come together to create a meaningful difference. Seeing everyone contribute their time and energy with dedication was inspiring. I also learned that leadership is not only about giving instructions but about motivating others to work with purpose and

compassion. President Purcell demonstrated this through her calm direction and encouragement throughout the event.



Cherise Armstrong Rotarian with UIMF members Abbie Fisher and Antoine Mwamba assembling kits.

Emotionally, this experience was both humbling and fulfilling. It reminded us that even simple acts of kindness, such as preparing hygiene kits, can significantly improve the dignity and well-being of individuals facing hardship. It also reinforced my belief personally in the importance of service as an essential component of education. Through service, we not only help others but also grow personally, developing empathy, gratitude, and a stronger sense of responsibility toward our community. Overall, the Hygiene Kits Service Project provided me with meaningful insight into the role of humanitarian service in promoting community well-being.

By Antoine Mwamba, a member of the UVU Rotaract and Political Science Student at Utah Valley University.