

Small But Mighty: Packing Hygiene Kits For Community Members in Need

On October 13, 2025, at 5:00 pm student volunteers, members of the Utah Valley University (UVU) Rotaract Club and Utah International Mountain Forum, as well as participants of UVU's POLS 3560 G course joined together on UVU's campus with service coordinator and Orem-Lindon Rotarian Cherise Armstrong to assemble hygiene kits. These hygiene kits, filled with soaps, wash cloths, toothbrushes, and more, were put together as part of the above entities' broader efforts to promote student-engaged learning (SEL) and showcase the impact of meaningful student involvement when it moves beyond the classroom.



(L to R): Antoine Mwamba, Cherise Armstrong, and Abbie Fisher Pack Hygiene Kits

While in attendance, I worked with my peers in an assembly-style line to pack and seal these items that would be distributed to unhoused community members. While small, each element can help meet basic daily needs that may be inaccessible to individuals who may be experiencing homelessness, and support an improved sense of health, comfort, and dignity for those who receive them.

One of the most meaningful parts of this project was the chance to build real connections with the people I was serving alongside. Before assembling the hygiene kits, we took time to go around and introduce ourselves. Learning more about my peers Roland Kabongo, Antoine Mwamba, and Natalia Figueroa to name a few, reminded me that sustainable development and community service aren't just abstract goals, but that they are actions rooted in relationships, understanding, and shared responsibility of our collective efforts.

Community service is an important cornerstone of civic engagement, and student engaged learning offers to expand students' reach and understanding of civic engagement through providing unique opportunities to lead, collaborate, and create lasting impact. Through SEL, students develop hands-on leadership experience and bridge gaps between academic learning and real-world challenges. In the recent initiative, we not only addressed urgent local needs but also connected to broader global concerns such as poverty and sustainability. In joining together, students can work collaboratively to tackle issues that demand both empathy and unity. Activities like these help to build professional readiness and are designed to sharpen teamwork, leadership, and creative and strategic thinking skills. These skills are essential for students preparing to engage in global policy discussions, including, but not limited to, our group's upcoming participation in United Nations forums on sustainable development during the 2026 Summer Semester.

Through actively participating in service-based learning, students like myself not only contribute to immediate community needs but also position ourselves as globally minded professionals, ready to address complex challenges with compassion and, hopefully, a little bit of experience to back it up.

Abigail Fisher, Utah Valley University Rotaractor