

My Contribution to the World Polio Day Observation at Utah Valley University

On Thursday, October 23, 2025, I had the privilege of participating in an event organized by my Political Science class as part of our service-learning model. The event took place from 11:30 p.m. to 12:45p.m. at Utah Valley University (UVU) and was held in commemoration of World Polio Day. This activity was conducted in collaboration with the Utah Valley University Rotaractors and the Orem-Lindon Rotary Club. It aimed to raise awareness about global efforts to eradicate polio and to highlight the impact of Rotary International's partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations in fighting this disease.



Orem-Lindon Rotary Club and UVU Rotaract members at the World Polio Day Observation event October 23, 2025.

As a member of the organizing team, my specific responsibility was to ask questions, particularly regarding potential contacts we could reach out to while preparing for our upcoming study abroad trip to Geneva, Switzerland, next year. The teamwork displayed by my classmates was inspiring. Everyone contributed actively, some handled logistics, others managed communication, and many helped promote the event. Our collaboration reflected the power of collective action in service projects.

The keynote speaker for the event was Mr. Oliver Rosenbauer, the Communications Officer of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative at the World Health Organization (WHO). He shared insightful updates about the global fight against polio, noting that 99% of the virus has been eradicated worldwide. However, he emphasized that the disease remains endemic in certain

regions such as Pakistan and Afghanistan, where cultural, religious, and political barriers make vaccination efforts difficult. Mr. Rosenbauer explained how WHO and Rotary International continue to work tirelessly to reach the final one percent of eradication by 2030.



UVU students' members of Rotaractors at the World Polio Day Observation even October 23, 2025.

Also in attendance were several distinguished guests, including Dr. Jay DeSart, Chair of the UVU Department of History and Political Science, and Ms. Cathy Ambrose, President of the Orem-Lindon Rotary Club. Their participation showed the importance of university-community partnerships in promoting awareness of global health issues. Throughout the event, students, faculty members, and Rotaractors engaged in discussions and asked thoughtful questions about the challenges and successes of global vaccination campaigns. Rotary International's role in polio eradication has been instrumental. Since 1988, Rotary has partnered with WHO, UNICEF, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI). Their work in Central Asia, particularly in countries that



Antoine Mwamba asking question during the World Polio Day Observation even October 23, 2025.

As a foreign student, this experience was personally meaningful. I have witnessed in my home country and in many developing regions how cultural traditions, family structures, and limited access to healthcare can create barriers for volunteers working to promote vaccination. Hearing Mr. Rosenbauer share his experiences made me realize that even small acts of service like organizing awareness events can have a ripple effect across the world. It also strengthened my motivation to continue serving others and to contribute to international development efforts in the future.



Group Photo; Members of the Rotaract, President of President of the Orem-Lindon Rotary Club and UVU students from the Political Science Department after the World Polio Day Observation even October 23, 2025.

In conclusion, participating in the World Polio Day Observation was both educational and inspiring. It reminded me that global challenges require cooperation, compassion, and commitment. I am proud to have played a part in an event that connected UVU students with global health leaders and demonstrated how education and service can unite people around a common humanitarian goal.

By Antoine Mwamba; A Political Science Student, at Utah Valley University.