

## **UVU Students Host World Polio Day Event with Mr. Oliver Rosenbauer**

On Thursday, October 23, 2025, at 11:30 am, Utah Valley University (UVU) students like myself (Abbie Fisher) participating in the course POLS 3560G, organized an event for the observation of World Polio Day in their classroom, hosting keynote speaker Mr. Oliver Rosenbauer to talk on the global efforts to end polio. This event, hosted in conjunction with the UVU Rotaract and Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), brought together local Rotarians and community leaders alike, with student leaders Natalia Figueroa, Janessa-Michelle Purcell, Erynn Lammi, Curtis Bristol, and Kade Van Ry to welcome the keynote speaker.



### ***Students, Rotarians, and community leaders listen to Mr. Rosenbauer speak over a Teams call***

Mr. Rosenbauer, who dialed in from Switzerland, has worked with the World Health Organization (WHO) as spokesperson for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, working closely alongside Rotary, Rotaract, and the PolioPlus program. As a leading voice and expert in the global polio eradication effort, Mr. Rosenbauer discussed with the group the scientific and social foundations of ending polio worldwide and the impact of Rotary International activities in the international fight against the disease. He highlighted that the combined efforts of international leaders and organizations, and those of civil volunteers, among others, have reduced global polio cases by over 99%, with transmission now limited primarily to Pakistan and Afghanistan, where the virus largely persists due to population movement. The disease, which has no natural reservoir, a limited infectious period, and an effective, easily administered

vaccine, is highly preventable and uniquely eradicable. However, as those in attendance learned, achieving eradication requires a continuous and intentional collective effort, especially in remote and war-torn communities. Pointing to the conflict in Gaza, Mr. Rosenbauer noted how a polio outbreak identified in the highly vulnerable and devastated region was successfully stopped through decisive political action, rapid response, and combined coordination. Action against polio, such as that taken in Gaza, can be continued through surveillance, widespread immunization, and community efforts to raise awareness and charitable contributions.



*Attendees pose for a group photo after the event*

For the general audience, this event helped to showcase the challenges and successes of polio eradication and fostered a sense of shared purpose, showing that every participant, whether as a student, volunteer, or local leader, plays a meaningful role in advancing a polio-free world. For the student leaders, the event offered additional hands-on experiences through student engaged learning (SEL), connecting classroom knowledge about global health, science, and diplomacy to real-world problem-solving. By organizing and facilitating the event, they developed practical skills in leadership, teamwork, and community outreach while gaining firsthand experience in global health advocacy. Being personally involved in planning and supporting this event was an incredibly rewarding experience. It gave me a deep sense of purpose and accomplishment knowing that my work contributed to an amazing global effort, one that, with continued effort, we hope will soon no longer be needed.