

## Observing World Polio Day with Mr. Oliver Rosenbauer

On October 23, 2025, a group of students working in connection with Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) and Orem - Lindon Rotary Club hosted an event at Utah Valley University to honor World Polio Day. The event, “Rotary and Rotaract’s Polio Plus Effort - A Global Quest to Eradicate an Ancient Scourge,” saw Mr. Oliver Rosenbauer, a spokesperson for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, speaking to the university students and Rotaract members about the global effort to eradicate Polio.



### **Janessa-Michelle Purcell, Utah Valley University Rotaract President, Opens the Event**

I had the opportunity to work with UIMF and Rotaract members such as Janessa-Michelle Purcell and Natalia Feguero to help set up and participate in this event. In the weeks leading up to the event, every student played a part in preparing to host Mr. Rosenbauer. Some students created the poster, while others contacted the local Rotary Club to invite them to participate. Others persevered through technical challenges on the day of the event to get everything set up so that attendees could hear Mr. Rosebauer through the online system.

On the day of the event various speakers such as Janet Colvin, Associate Dean of the College of Humanities, Cathy Ambrose, President of the Orem-Lindon Rotary Club, and Dr. Jay DeSart, History and Political Science chair at UVU, introduced and thanked Mr. Rosenbauer for his time and presentation on behalf of their respective organizations. We then heard a presentation from Mr. Rosenbauer on the World Health Organization’s (WHO’s) efforts to completely eradicate Polio. This presentation raised awareness for effects and concerns caused by Polio right now, as well as for what WHO is doing every year to isolate cases and distribute billions of vaccines.

The Orem-Lindon Rotary Club was present and discussed their contribution to this global effort, as they have played a special role in helping raise funds in Utah to go towards Polio eradication. Rotary International and WHO continue to work closely together towards vaccinating and eradicating Polio in all parts of the World.



**Janet Colvin, Associate Dean of the College of Humanities, Greets Mr. Rosenbauer**

My specific role in the event had to do with curating the brochure that would display the details of the event. I worked with Natalia Fuigero and Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev to compile information on all the speakers and the program for the event. I then put all the information together in a readable and coherent brochure.



**World Polio Day Observation Brochure, created by Alley Holt**

In participating in this event, I worked towards developing many professional and soft skills I will need for the rest of my career and life. I learned the importance of clear communication and forward thinking. I also learned valuable teamwork and design skills that I will continue to put to use for future events. I learned how important it is to pay attention to the small details the first time, as they are the things that will allow things to run smoothly.

I look forward to utilizing the skills I have developed and the knowledge I have gained in further outreach and awareness efforts, such as during the 16th United Nations International Mountain Day event in December or possibly in the student trip to the United Nations and World Health Organization next summer.

Having friends affected by Polio in their childhood and having family members suffering chronically due to viral diseases, it was meaningful to hear about the global efforts of millions of people to help eradicate a disease that can dramatically affect someone's life. Events like these are important because, as Mr. Rosenbauer noted, one of the biggest things we can do to facilitate change is to bring awareness. Through participating in this event I am reminded of how essential it is to stay involved with important issues at local all the way to global levels. The small part we play at a local level, raising awareness and donations, adds up to what is now 99.9% of Polio eradicated, and what will eventually be the 100% elimination of one of the world's deadliest diseases.



**Group Photo of Participants after the World Polio Day Event**

I am thankful for the knowledge I've gained from this experience, as well as from Mr. Oliver Rosenbauer and all the individuals who participated. This event would not have been possible without Mr. Oliver Rosenbauer and his continuing activism towards eradicating Polio. Nor without the help of members of the Utah International Mountain Forum, Orem-Lindon Rotary Club, Utah Valley University Staff, the Comparative Politics of Central Asia class, or our mentor Dr. Baktybek Abdrisaev. With the help of these people, members of this community will continue to bring awareness to global issues that affect us on every level.

**By Alley Holt, Political Science Student at Utah Valley University**