

Behind the Scenes of World Polio Day at UVU

On October 23rd 2025, at 12 pm at Utah Valley University (UVU) in the Liberal Arts building, 8th UVU World Polio Day was hosted. The keynote speaker was Mr. Oliver Rosenbauer, the Communications Officer for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative, World Health Organization. This was in partnership with the Orem-Lindon Rotary Club as well as UVU Rotaractors. This event hosted not only Mr. Rosenbauer but also Dr. Janet Colvin, Associate Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Cathy Ambrose, the President of the Orem-Lindon Rotary Club, as well as Dr. Jay Desart who is the Chair of the UVU Department of History and Political Science.



View from the guest section of the event, showcasing the format of the event as well as Dr. Rosenbauer Presenting

This event was to raise awareness of the eradication efforts that are being made, as well as the progress for this initiative we have already succeeded in. The event highlighted opportunities and information on Polio itself, how it spreads from an endemic to a pandemic, and what we as UVU students in or out of the Rotaract club can do to help, big and small efforts included. The students of UVU organized and planned this event with their advisor, Dr. Baktybek Abdrysaev, as well as the Rotaract club leaders in coalition with the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at UVU, and Foreign Affairs club leaders. The specific task I oversaw was deciding on a seating chart with Garrett Bingham. Ensuring that all guests were seated in a manner relative to the script I was given was important to improve the flow of movement, as well as dedicating specific spots to guests who were not speakers but vital to the meeting. The seating chart was arranged by us, and I wrote names on place cards to give to guests in their assigned seating upon arrival. An

overflow plan was also decided on, gathering chairs from the Science Lab and Math Lab. My other task was to take pictures, though this was not difficult feat as the presentation was so informative I found it easy to take and upload pictures of the event for fellow classmates.



Picture taken by Louyoko Christ, over the guests in attendance

As per Mr. Oliver Rosenbauer, Rotary International has been vital in this specific goal to eradicate polio, and in the campaign itself. They have supported immunization drives, data programs that survey geographic areas of high diseased rates, large advocacy efforts, as well as statistical analysis of what next steps should be taken based off data from cases going as far back as 2001. Rotary International is in specific partnership with the World Health Organization, UNICEF and of course the Centers for Disease Control and Prevents with Global Polio Eradication Initiative. While the focus of this campaign is on Central Asia, its ideas and ethics are extended to the rest of the world if there ever are endemics or other breakouts of polio. Polio is also not the end. Once the eradication is completed, the battle to ensure the health of the ecosystem and community of affected areas will need Rotary International's help to maintain such success.

Right now, the main goal and success from Rotary International is the vaccinations offered in high coverages to affected areas, as well as the surveillance methods used to keep track of the exact numbers of reported infections throughout the region, as well as the world. The actual presence of this campaign in person was astounding and inspiring. It truly brings a group of people from all walks of life to fight against something so impactful. Mr. Rosenbauer educates clearly and calmly, ethically answering all questions from the student body as well as faculty with equal respect, knowing that there are varying levels of scientific knowledge

to understand the subject matter. The presentation itself raised awareness among those of us who had little to know about World Polio Day as well as the Rotaract clubs combined. This not only utilized the National Day of Awareness, but the clubs themselves and truly showcased what students and faculty at UVU can accomplish together.

President of the Foreign Affairs club, Natalia Figueroa warmly greeted everyone at the event, smoothly transitioning to the president of UVU Rotaract and the UIMF, Janessa-Michelle Purcell, to start the event. Then, with grateful regards, Dr. Janet Colvin made remarks on the importance and success of the World Polio Day. Other club members and vice presidents spoke opening about the generosity to meet today, and the hopefulness for reaching the accomplished eradication of Polio across Central Asia, including Curtis Bristol (UVU Rotaract VP), Cathy Ambrose (Orem-Lindon Rotary club member), Kade Van Ry (VP of Foreign Affairs). After Mr. Rosenbauer's informative presentation, questions were asked by students and faculty, and the event was closed successfully by Janessa-Michelle Purcell.



By Sasha Byrd: Everyone in Attendance for World Polio Day

The significance and student engagement of this event was vital and highlighted how communities are important when connecting global health subjects to actions from the network we build as students, faculty, and members. This active participation style of learning was largely beneficial to not only our academic career, but the goal of eradication itself, the midterm was bigger than just a grade and allowed us to use critical thinking skills to figure out solutions to problems, as well as working together. Collaborating as a team was vital to the success of the event and needed everyone to participate for everything to go smoothly. I have great appreciation for the work and professionalism needed to contribute to

events like this, having this only been my second time behind the scenes of such an event. Janessa Purcel and Natalia Figueroa are leaders I look up to and have been thoroughly inspired by their dedication and focus throughout the event's planning and event itself. I was honored to learn not only about the eradication of Polio, but a personal presentation on teamwork, community, and leadership.

Sasha Byrd: Seating Chart Coordinator and Photos for Event, Utah Valley University
Student