

Service, Solidarity, and My Contribution to the MLK Day Project

On January 20, 2026, at 6:00 p.m., I participated in Utah Valley University's Martin Luther King Jr. Service Project, an event designed to honor Dr. King's legacy through community service. Held in the student union building on campus, the activity involved assembling hygiene kits for local individuals and families in need. My role was to sort donated supplies, build complete kits, and help ensure the assembly line remained efficient. Although the task was simple, it was meaningful, contributing directly to the well-being of vulnerable members of our community.

The event was hosted by Dr. Sarah Williams, a professor in the Department of Social Work. In her opening speech, she highlighted the importance of collective action and how small contributions, like assembling hygiene kits, can have a profound impact on those facing homelessness and other hardships. Dr. Williams framed the project as a way to embody Dr. King's call for service, reminding us that even simple acts can advance social justice.



Natalia Figueroa assembles kits

The event was also a perfect example of UVU's student-engaged learning model, which encourages students to connect academic knowledge with real-world application. The hands-on nature of the project required teamwork, communication, and a shared responsibility—all key elements of experiential learning. It demonstrated how service activities not only address immediate community needs but also help students develop important life skills, such as collaboration and empathy. The project showed me how active engagement in service can deepen understanding of social issues and connect learning to personal values.

As I worked alongside other students, I had the chance to speak with Maria Ramirez, a fellow social work major. We discussed the importance of volunteering and how our academic experiences at UVU shaped our perspectives on social responsibility. Maria shared stories from her field placements, emphasizing the challenges faced by marginalized communities, which reinforced the need for ongoing community support.



Erynn Lammi serves local community

This experience taught me several valuable lessons. First, I realized how easy it is to overlook the everyday needs of others, especially those who are experiencing homelessness or instability. Hygiene kits, though modest, can provide a sense of dignity and comfort to people facing difficult circumstances. I also saw how much can be achieved when many people contribute small efforts toward a common goal. The sense of unity among participants reminded me that collective action is powerful.

On a personal level, I left the event with a deep sense of gratitude, humility, and motivation. Gratitude for the resources I often take for granted, humility in recognizing the needs of others, and motivation to continue serving beyond this one event. The experience was uplifting and reminded me that service is both a privilege and a responsibility.



Group Photo of UVU Rotaractors

In conclusion, participating in the MLK Day Service Project allowed me to contribute to a meaningful cause while experiencing the values of service and solidarity that Dr. King championed. It reinforced the importance of community involvement and

taught me that even small acts of service can have a lasting impact. This event deepened my understanding of how education and service can work together to create positive change in our communities.

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