

UIMF and International Mountain Day: A Celebration and Reminder of Why Mountains Matter

It can be easy to overlook mountains and those communities that live within them. After all mountains themselves have always been “there” and the people within are seemingly tucked away. The seclusion of the populations and potential indifference to mountains themselves can understandably lead to complacency. However the United Nations (UN) estimates that close to a billion people across the globe live in mountains and over half the world’s population relies on mountains for food and water. In other words, mountains do matter hence the UN 2018 International Mountain Day theme of #MountainsMatter.

On Wednesday, December 5, 2018, the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) had the opportunity to host a local celebration of International Mountain Day at Utah Valley University (UVU) and received recognition from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO) for our efforts in Sustainable Mountain Development (SMD). As a member of UIMF and Vice President of Campus Outreach, I had the opportunity to see firsthand the concerted efforts UIMF members put in both in preparation and hosting of a UVU event celebrating mountains and highlighting local SMD efforts.

Hagen Isaacson a freshman at UVU and Director of Service Project was tasked with leading all efforts regarding International Mountain Day no small task. However despite the potential overwhelming responsibility he stepped up demonstrating his resolve and offering a glimpse of what he is capable of. Megan Davis another freshman was another member of UIMF who proved her commitment to SMD through her participation in International Mountain Day. Despite her busy schedule, she quickly became involved in preparation for International Mountain Day and then on the day of the event she facilitated the recognition of each individual who had received certificates from the FAO-UN.



Hagen Isaacson moderated the IMD event at UVU

These are just two people who went above and beyond showing their mettle however there were many others who have joined UIMF this year and have each demonstrated excellence in their work. Though they are not named in this paper their work is invaluable to UIMF's success in SMD as is seen in the success of UIMF's International Mountain Day. Each individual member has shown immense capability and collectively they continue to propel UIMF to new heights. As a senior member of UIMF it is comforting and reassuring to see new members step up and help take the helm. It is a reminder that UIMF and SMD efforts in general are driven by those individuals and as long as we have people like those in UIMF the future will remain bright for UIMF and for SMD across the world.

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