

## Rotaract and International Mountain Day



*Samuel Elzinga UIMF President Speaks during IMD at UVU*

On December 2, 2019, Rotaractors Yana Anderson, Albeny Singh, Jose Coreas, and Caleb Stowell, and I had the privilege of contributing to the 10th annual celebration of International Mountain Day at Utah Valley University (UVU). The celebration was an opportunity for us to discuss with those in attendance matters relating to the contribution of Rotaract as part of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) to the Sustainable Mountain Development (SMD) agenda of the United Nations in the state of Utah and at the United Nations during 2019. UIMF is a coalition of student clubs at UVU.

Hannah Bieker, UVU Rotaractor, spoke during the 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March; several Rotaractors, including myself, participated at the 68<sup>th</sup> UN Civil Society Conference in Salt Lake City in August 26-28, 2019; UVU Rotaract also commemorated World Polio Day on October 23, 2019. In addition, we raised funds for SMD

activities through club rush, an organization of clubs on UVU campus committed to student outreach, at UVU.

Speakers at the IMD event included Dr. Baldomero Lago, CIO of the UVU office of Global Engagement, Dr. Rusty Butler, main representative at the United Nations for the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, Ms. Wendy Jyang, President of Utah China Friendship Improvement Sharing Hands Development and Commerce, an NGO, accredited with the United Nations and Mr. Uday Teki, President of the Project Work Groups. Topics such as UIMF advocacy campaign at the 64<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission of the Status of Women (CSW64) in March 2020, building on the successes from the 68<sup>th</sup> UN Civil Society Conference, held for the first time in Salt Lake City, UT on August 26-28, 2019 were discussed by presenters in details. Michael Hinatsu and Lacey Meyer, UIMF leaders spoke about both achievements in SMD advocacy of the student coalition during 2019 and plans for the promotion of mountain targets and cause in 2020 at the UN and in the state of Utah.



*Rotaractors and Rotarians after the IMD with certificates from FAO-UN for SMD advocacy*

The combined efforts of UVU Rotaract in the days leading up to the event helped to increase awareness of the celebration across campus by presenting about IMD during scheduled lectures and classes. Rotaract was happy to aid preparations for the 10<sup>th</sup> annual celebration and will continue to help make the IMD celebration a success. Several Rotarians and Rotaractors were also awarded certificates of the UN Mountain Partnership during IMD.

Rotary representatives from across the state also attended the event. Orem Rotary President-Elect Dr. Dean Robinson was able to attend for the duration of the event and was awarded a certificate for the efforts contributed during the 68<sup>th</sup> UN Civil Society Conference. Dr. Robinson also accepted a certificate on behalf of Dr. John Hanrahan, Rotary District Governor, and Clark Merkley, Orem Rotary Club President. Jose Velasco, Rotary Assistant Governor, and Stephanie Velasco, District Rotaract Representative were also able to attend the celebration.

I found time to discuss the event with the other Rotary members such as Jose Velasco during the interim and was happy to hear of their overall enjoyment of the celebration. They expressed how happy they are to see Rotary and Rotaract becoming involved with other NGOs and the United Nations in global efforts. We also discussed the Rotaract international conference being held this spring 2020 in Puerto Penasco Mexico. During the conference, Rotaractors from around the globe will gather to discuss future efforts and to be trained by the world's leading Rotaract members.

The 10<sup>th</sup> International Mountain Day celebration was a great success and UVU Rotaract was happy to contribute to the efforts of the Global SMD agenda. We look forward to our continued partnership with UIMF and our combined efforts towards sustainable development during 2020.

*Kyle Warren, President, UVU Rotaract*