

Rotaract Polio Activity



Yana Anderson, UVU Rotaract President speaks during the event

This week I had the opportunity to attend Utah Valley University (UVU) Rotaract's virtual presentation on International Polio Day commemoration. It was on the 21st of October 2020 at 12:15pm. The two main presenters were Dr. Leckman, past Governor of the District Rotary and Yana Anderson, President of UVU Rotaract. I found this presentation very intriguing, because I was unaware of the problems we face from polio in today's world. I was amazed at the work that Rotary International has done, and the high-level partners that they cooperate with. I was also interested in the progress they have made; it gave an impressive message on the effects of their charity work.

Prior to this event I had only briefly heard of Rotary International. I knew they performed service and charity work, but I was unaware of the vast scope of the organization. I was really impressed when Dr. Leckman told the audience about the partners that Rotary International works with. They work with huge organizations like the WHO, CDC and the Bill and Melinda

Gates Foundation. This proved to me that Rotary International is a legitimate, dependable and trustworthy organization. These organizations like the WHO require results, and Rotary International is delivering.



Dr. Leckman speaks via Zoom

Dr. Leckman showed statistics and maps that showed how bad polio had been in the past vs how it is today. Polio started in the US in 1916 and continued every summer until finally vaccines started being made in the 50s and 60s. The most impressive progress that I saw has been made since 1985, when Rotary International made eradicating polio its main priority. Since 1985 Rotary International has worked vigorously to deliver vaccines across the world. Now there are only two countries where polio still presents an issue, Afghanistan and Pakistan. They have made incredible progress in getting rid of polio for good.

The biggest worry I had in my mind when he Dr. Leckman was presenting this information was the overall cost of the project. Everything in this world revolves around money, and even with big donors like The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, money is a big barrier. Dr. Leckman addressed my concern by presenting the projected cost to complete the project,

against global costs if we don't eradicate polio. Needless to say, the cost of the project was far less than that of keeping the virus alive. Dr. Leckman was also very optimistic on the cost, he made it seem very attainable because of contributions from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This vital part of the presentation made the project seem much more legitimate, realistic and achievable.

Attending this presentation helped me see the importance of setting yourself up for success. Rotary International made a goal on an issue that needed to be addressed and found ways to make that goal achievable. Some of these ways were getting like-minded partners that make your cause more legitimate, like the WHO and the CDC. These organizations also help by giving them the resources to achieve this goal. Rotary International also worked on a plan that would deliver the most success. They did this by targeting specific countries or regions that needed the most attention. Rotary International is also very dedicated to their goals. They started the goal to end polio in 1985, and they are still successfully working to achieve that goal. I can implement these actions for the goals I have in everyday life. I can work alongside other dedicated individuals and make comprehensive strategies to achieve my life's goals and ambitions.

Overall, I was very impressed by the professionalism and knowledge that Dr. Leckman and Yana Anderson showed in their presentation. When I first heard the topic of their presentation, I was a little skeptical as to how big of a deal polio actually is. Here in the US it seems like something of the past, but for millions of people worldwide, it is a very real threat. I also admire how Rotary sets themselves up for success. They partner with huge organizations like the WHO, CDC and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to make their goals possible. With the help of these organizations, Rotary International has been able to deliver vaccines all over the world. They are very close to achieving their goal of eliminating polio. Polio is now only an issue in two countries, Pakistan and Afghanistan. These countries pose a problem for Rotary International because they are either unsafe or don't welcome foreign aid workers. Regardless of these barriers, from the presentation that I was given I am certain Rotary international will find a way to finish their objective. I was thoroughly impressed by Rotary's achievements and progress, and I look forward to hearing more about other projects they work on.

Kaden Smart, UVU student