



## **International Mountain Day 2020**

On December 2, 2020 the eleventh annual International Mountain Day (IMD) observation at Utah Valley University (UVU) was live streamed via Facebook on the Utah International Mountain Forum's (UIMF) page. As a part of the planning process I learned a great amount about the IMD celebration and the purpose behind the Forum. Previous to my planning contributions I had not heard of IMD or its purpose of advocating mountain communities around the world. This presentation has provided a thorough insight on the reasoning and importance of the Utah International Mountain Forum and their mission of Sustainable Mountain Development (SMD).

UVU directly involves students through a unique student-engaged learning (SEL) model. From my responsibility alone, I learned how to draft an informational advertisement for an event in a professional and efficient manner. In addition, I learned how to submit it through the campus-wide UVU announcement system. This is something that will prove useful in the future

in my personal and professional development and in my position as Vice President of Logistics for the UVU National Security Society.



Virtual Facebook attendees.

The information behind mountain communities provided by all of the speakers was extremely interesting and insightful. Upon further research, I found data on the United Nations website stating “mountains are home to 15% of the world’s population and host about half of the world’s biodiversity hotspots. They provide freshwater for everyday life to half of humanity. Their conservation is a key factor for sustainable development and is part of Goal 15 of the [UN Sustainable Development Goals]” (UN.org). This information, combined with that provided at the event, made me contemplate the importance of mountain communities and the biodiversity which they support. The fact that half of the world’s freshwater is provided through mountains is such a substantial example to the importance of their protection. Between climate change and exploitation, action is necessary to avoid the decay of mountains and thus half of the world’s

freshwater supply and biodiversity. The United Nations approach with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is an extremely interesting and motivating approach to the topic. The years 2021 to 2030 are going to be years of great importance environmentally under the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This restoration initiative has the potential to have a large impact for future generations.



Dean Robinson, President of the Orem Rotary chapter.

Dean Robinson, the President of the Orem Rotary chapter, gave an intriguing presentation on the impact of Rotaract International regarding Polio and its eradication. Previously, I had not known that the disease was still active in two countries; Afghanistan and Pakistan. The goal to have the disease completely eradicated is noble and beneficial to the mountain communities impacted. In addition, Anna Mahalak, Youth Engagement Manager to the United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA), gave educational

remarks regarding the UNA-USA and their plethora of chapters across the nation. I was not aware that the UNA-USA was the oldest non-government organization. Dustin Liu, Youth Observer to UNA-USA, shared a message on biodiversity. This illustrated to me the significance of the organization and the impact they have had on the world due to their long-lasting involvement.

The International Mountain Day observation is an excellent way to promote the importance of mountains. Declared by the United Nations, IMD is necessary to educate individuals like myself. Individuals are who hold their communities and governments to a higher standard and hold them accountable. This standard is elevated via contribution and dedication to the Sustainable Development Goals, such as SDG 15 that was a focus of IMD 2020.

Kimberly Mackay, Student at Utah Valley University