

Speaking at and Helping with Rotaract World Polio Day Panel & Initiative



Tristin Juarez-Smith, the UVU Rotaract President opens the event

“We educate and equip communities to stop the spread of life-threatening diseases.” This statement is featured on Rotary International’s website under the section on fighting disease. One of Rotary’s missions is to fight infections across the globe, including Polio. In Utah County, community members from Orem-Lindon Rotary and Utah Valley University Rotaract came together for a World Polio Day panel and lunch in preparation for World Polio Day on October 24, 2022. The panel featured several speakers, including keynote presenter Dr. Joseph Johnson, MD. Dr. Johnson runs a private pediatric practice in Provo and is currently the medical director of the Well-Newborn Nurseries at Utah Valley Hospital and Orem Community Hospital.

The event opened with remarks from Tristin Juarez-Smith, the UVU Rotaract President. Following Tristin's opening statement, Lilly Hall, a UVU Public Health student and Rotaract member, gave a speech presenting Polio statistics and information about public health. Dr. Johnson provided a PowerPoint on disease eradication. His PowerPoint presented different ways diseases spread, the concept of herd immunity, and an in-depth discussion on Polio, its spread, and various vaccines used in the eradication effort. Spencer Mack, the Orem-Lindon Rotary President, offered concluding remarks, conveying his passion and commitment to the work done by Rotarians.



Dr. Johnson, the medical director of the Well-Newborn Nurseries at Utah Valley Hospital and Orem Community Hospital as a keynote presenter.

Toward the end of the lunch, I gave a speech on the work UVU students have done to help eradicate Polio and raise awareness for other worthwhile initiatives. One best practice for engaging with these initiatives has been through the Student Engaged Learning model or SEL at Utah Valley

University. The SEL model has allowed students to work to solve significant issues, like Polio, with faculty members advising in a limited role.



Rachel Welker, UVU Rotaractor speaks during the event

On the way to solving significant issues, students using the SEL model learn professional skills, like organizing events and the proper protocol associated with each event. In preparation for the luncheon, Foreign Affairs club President, Stephan Atkinson, walked me through the procedure for buying gifts for keynote speakers and honored guests of functions. This is important in expressing gratitude for the incredible work community members do and our appreciation for their help in making our event a success.



Orem-Lindon Rotarians and UVU Rotaractors during the event

The theme I took away from the event was the commonality of each of the speakers. They had all found their unique link to the initiative to end Polio. Lilly Hall utilized her background in Public Health as the lens through which she viewed Polio and other health initiatives. Dr. Joseph Johnson's pediatric specialty enabled him to see how diseases impacted the lives of children and gave him a current voice on best practices for safeguarding all ages against disease. Spencer Mack used his thirty-five years of service in the Orem-Lindon Rotary Club to inspire new Rotarians on how to engage with Polio and other vital service opportunities in the community. My connection came because my birthday coincided with World Polio Day. This collision of important days in my life led me to in-depth research on Polio and opened my eyes to how I could help end Polio through student-engaged learning. It is our full engagement in

Rachel Welker, UVU Foreign Affairs Club Vice President and UVU Rotaractor