

World Polio Day 2022  
Utah Valley University  
Rachel Welker Presentation

Hello, my name is Rachel Welker. I am the current Vice President of the Foreign Affairs club and a junior at Utah Valley University. I am ecstatic to be with you today as we turn our focus to ending polio globally. World Polio Day is on Oct. 24, which is also my birthday. It is the personal connections that propel purposes forward. As you attend this event, I hope you will find your own personal link that leads you to help join this cause.

Last weekend, I attended a Utah Rotary event that hosted John Germ, the immediate past president of Rotary International, as the keynote speaker. He shared this acronym, "Team stands for Together Everyone Accomplishes More." His acronym reminded me of the connections that can be formed through student-engaged learning. Through Student-engaged Learning, or SEL, students work as a group to solve real-world issues, with faculty serving in a limited role as mentors. This allows students to take charge of their educational experience by voicing opinions, helping with events, and sharing insights and experiences in lectures, class assignments, and events such as this one.

Since 2011, students here at Utah Valley University, through the Utah Mountain International Forum, have advocated for mountain communities, some of the most neglected communities in the world. We have worked to strengthen the voice of the mountain communities in Kyrgyzstan, Yemen, Guatemala, Mexico, Columbia, China, Taiwan, and locally. Utilizing the SEL model, we advocate for disease eradication, address the climate crisis, push for gender equality, promote the inclusion of mountain women and families in policy decisions, and bring communities quality education, just to name a few.

Our work with the United Nations, Rotary, and other international organizations has shown that initiatives like these are not limited to those currently working in the field. On [endpolio.org](http://endpolio.org), the official website for Rotary's end polio initiative, you find event ideas to help raise awareness for eradicating polio. Some event ideas include hosting an end polio walk and ride, a concert, or a watch party. Our influence doesn't end there. As students, we have friends, classmates, and colleagues who want to get involved but don't know the first steps to take. The student-engaged learning program has taught me that a simple invitation is the first step for involvement, and follow-up is the next. We, as students, can provide new perspectives and innovations to many of the issues our world faces today. As you can see today, students of all ages and community members can work together to advocate and create a bright future worldwide. Your attendance alone makes a difference.