

# World Polio Day 2023 Observation at Utah Valley University

*On October 24, 2023, Utah Valley University Rotaractors hosted the World Polio Day Observation at UVU campus.*



**Eradicating Polio isn't easy,  
but making history never is !!!**

## World Polio Day



**October 24, 2023 | 2:30 pm**  
**UVU - Utah Valley University**  
**Bingham Gallery**  
**(Roots of Knowledge)**

Entry is open for all students and there will be refreshments.



On October 24, 2023, Carter Darger led Utah Valley Universities' event for World Polio Day aimed at educating students about polio eradication. Utah Valley University Rotaractors hosted the Annual World Polio Day observation at UVU in collaboration with Orem-Lindon and Rotary District 5420 Rotarians and sponsored by the UVU Office for Global Engagement. This year's event was extremely special, featuring keynote speaker Rotary District Governor John Redd who spoke to students, faculty, and community members about the history of polio eradication and the worldwide End Polio Now campaign.



*Carter Darger, Utah Valley University (UVU) Rotaract President lead and moderated the World Polio Day Observation at the university.*

The event this year was organized and led by a team of student leaders at Utah Valley University, including Rotaract President Carter Darger, Vice President Janessa Purcell, Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) President Stephan Atkinson, and UIMF Vice President Ian Abbott. UVU Rotaract is an offshoot of the large non-profit group Rotary International, in the form of a club at the university sponsored by Orem-Lindon Rotary and UIMF, a coalition of student clubs at UVU. UIMF has repeatedly promoted United Nations Sustainable Development Goals through Sustainable Mountain Development in the State of Utah and at conferences at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. UIMF and UVU Rotaract work to enable and encourage students, especially non-traditional learners, to engage in study, research, and collective action through the Student-Engaged Learning (SEL) model where they work as a group and collaborate with faculty



mentors beyond the classroom. Non-traditional students are those which balance education with family and work responsibilities. This method empowers students in an inclusive way, both traditional and non-traditional learners, rewarding them with the professional skills and knowledge necessary to make meaningful and lasting change locally and globally for mountain communities.



*A sign for Polio Vaccination (Left Middle) showcased in the Roots of Knowledge art installation-stained glass mosaic, dedicated to celebrating the triumphs and challenges overcome by humanity. The piece's description reads, "Polio is a debilitating and sometimes fatal illness that frequently affects children. In 1955, Jonas Salk developed the first successful polio vaccine. By 2016, only a few isolated cases still occur."*

The student team hosted a presentation at 2:30pm with students, faculty, and community members in the Roots of Knowledge Art Installation at the Fulton Library in the Bingham Gallery room. The event was joined by university students, an international relations class, and faculty and community members.

The World Polio Day observation agenda was as follows:

1. Introductory remarks by Carter Darger, UVU Rotaract President
2. Keynote led by Rotary International by Mr. John Redd, Governor, Rotary International, District 5420
3. Presentation from Dr. Geoffrey Cockerham: *The International Pursuit to End Polio: WHO and the UN on the Frontlines*
4. Remarks from Stephan Atkinson, UVU UIMF President
5. Joint World Polio Day Video from the “Nomad” Rotaract Club from the Kyrgyz Republic
6. Concluding Remarks from Carter Darger



*Keynote speaker, Rotary District Governor John Redd on the “Rotary International & Polio Eradication - The Power of One”.*

As the keynote speaker, Governor Redd spoke on poliovirus, first informing students of the nature of the disease and then on the timeline of the outbreak and subsequent fight to eradicate the disease. He showcased contemporary methods the world is taking to fight polio and spoke on Rotary International’s unique ability to reach underserved areas around the globe, fighting polio on the frontlines. The large non-profit group Rotary International has been a leading force in providing funds, technical experience, and manpower to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) since



its beginning. Governor Redd highlighted recent successes between Rotary and the LDS Church which has donated \$5,000,000 to the Rotary Foundation to secure funds for polio eradication in 2022, making Rotary District 5420 (covering the state of Utah and parts of surrounding states) second worldwide in funds raised to fight polio. He made special note that LDS church representatives praise that “[Rotary] can go where we can’t,” in field vaccinations. Rotary in Utah has had far-reaching effects when it comes to ending polio, with roots of the current partnership between the Rotary International and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation taking place at the Utah Rotary conference in 2007. The results of the partnership have since blossomed into a 2 to 1 match for all donations towards eradicating polio that goes through Rotary International, essentially tripling every contribution made to fight the disease. His closing remarks highlighted the “power of one,” asserting that the way towards solving international issues like eradicating poliovirus is paved, at its core, by individuals who choose to make a difference. He encouraged students, faculty, and community members alike to understand their power in making a difference.



**Janessa-Michelle Purcell, Vice President of UVU Rotaract club introduces Dr. Jeffery Cockerham**



**UVU lecturer, Dr. Geoffrey Cockerham discussed global efforts to eradicate polio**

Polio, also known as poliomyelitis, is a viral infection caused by the poliovirus, which can result in paralysis and even fatality. This disease primarily spreads through person-to-person contact and currently lacks a cure. However, it can be completely prevented through vaccination. The World Health Organization (WHO), a specialized agency of the United Nations, plays a vital role in coordinating global efforts to combat polio, spearheading the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) in collaboration with various partners. The United Nations (UN), as a comprehensive international organization, supports initiatives such as the GPEI to not only eliminate polio but also achieve broader global health goals. The global pursuit to end polio involves multifaceted strategies, including vaccination campaigns, surveillance, and rigorous monitoring, all executed by a coalition of organizations, including national governments, WHO, UNICEF, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, among others. "On the frontlines" typically refers to the areas where active polio cases persist, highlighting the critical importance of vaccination campaigns and disease surveillance in these regions.





**Ian Abbott, Vice President of Utah International Mountain Forum, introducing Stephan Atkinson, President of Utah International Mountain Forum**



**Stephan Atkinson, Giving his talk about the link between UVU Rotaract and the Orem-Lindon Rotary Club**

In the address, Stephan Atkinson highlighted the significance of two interconnected topics at the university, Rotaract and World Polio Day. They emphasize the commitment to engaging students in global change through education and empowerment. The speech recounts key moments in the university's Rotaract history, such as its involvement in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, hosting World Polio Day, participating in various community service projects with the Orem-Lindon Rotary Club, and fundraising efforts. It also mentions the recognition received by the UVU Rotaract Club and the ongoing partnership with Osh Technological University in the Kyrgyz Republic to address polio and Rotary International's goals. The address concluded by introducing Rotaract partners from the Kyrgyz Republic who have prepared greetings for the World Polio Day event in 2024.



**The “Nomad” Rotaract Club from the Kyrgyz Republic joined this event by sending virtual greetings.**





**Group photo of the WPD Event**



**Group photo of UVU students with Governor John Redd.**

World Polio Day at UVU was sponsored by the History and Political Science Department, the Office of Global Engagement, and the Orem-Lindon Rotary Club.

*By Janessa Purcell, Vice-President, UVU Rotaract*

LINKS:

Facebook livestream: [https://fb.watch/n\\_LbXTXCdU/](https://fb.watch/n_LbXTXCdU/)

WPD Task List: [WPD Task List](#)

WPD Script: [Script](#)

WPD Prep link: <https://www.uvu.edu/utahimf/blog/2309wpdprep.html>