

## **Days for Girls commemorates International Women's Day**

In celebration of International Women's Day, Utah Valley University (UVU) hosted Days for Girls International event on March 5, 2016 as an opportunity to provide service to the organization. Myself, and other members of the Foreign Affairs club were present that day as well. Days for Girls is an incredible organization that reaches young women all over the world and supplies sustainable solution to feminine care to young women who otherwise do not have any sustainable options.



Celeste Mergens, who is the CEO and founder was present during the event. She gave an important speech about how Days for Girls was founded and the work they do for young women. During her address she made the extremely important connection of women's reproductive health, and their education. She stated that teenage women in many parts of the world were forced to skip school when they are on there menstrual cycle due to no sanitary and sustainable solutions for women's in underprivileged areas for feminine care. Along with this these young women who live

in these areas live in areas due to low education so often are stigmatized and shunned when they are going through these biological processes. These young women were quite literally being shamed into not attending school, for this reason targeting these demographics is so important due to the extreme situations it can place these women into. Not only was I blown away by this but also by the realization that something biological and completely normal was stopping young women from attending school because they didn't have any other option.

Due to this reason Celeste started Days for Girls and it has expanded immensely to meet the enormous needs all over the world. Today, she noted, Days for Girls has reached more than a million women and girls in over 116 countries. The way they do this is precisely the reason why we volunteered at Utah Valley University to aid them. Days for Girls creates and sends Days for Girls Kits all over the world. Celeste Mergens tasked us with creating Days for Girls PODS (which is short for Portable Object of Dignity). This process for us included tracing outlines, cutting, and sewing together pieces of fabric which would eventually serve as a pad that women and girls would receive as part of their Days for Girls Kit. They then take this kits and go to areas of need and not only teach these women about how to use these kits but they present information on sexual health and how this kit can be sustainable for years to come. During her presentation Celeste mentioned that a kit can last for years, and recently they received news that a kit had lasted for 5 years! It was incredible to hear this, and truly emphasized how large the need is for sustained solutions.

The Days for Girls model is proof that sustainable solutions such as the kits they produce literally gives girls their days back they would've missed from life and school if they were menstruating. It was an incredible opportunity to help serve an organization doing so much for women and girls. It was also great to see how easy it is to help these types of organizations and all they really need is our time. The work was easy and extremely meaningful. Together, we here at Utah Valley University were able to create thousands of these pads that would be sent to El Salvador for this specific event. Days for Girls made such an impression on me that I will continue to volunteer with the organizational and I am very happy to have gotten the Foreign Affairs club involved in this endeavor.

*Rebecca Bindraban, President, Foreign Affairs Club*