

I am Confident that Mountains Matter for Youth

I learned a lot from today's presentation at Utah Valley University (UVU). The first thing I learned was December 11th, 2019 is International Mountain Day. I was not aware of such a day. Utah is known for its mountainous region, which is similar to Switzerland. Because I spent the past several months studying Switzerland at my class on International Relations, so this topic is relevant specifically to me. The premise of today's celebration was "Mountains Matter for Youth". This premise is based on the fact that the youth is tasked with the responsibility to make the world a better place. The first youth speaker we listened to was Ms. Lacey Meyer she is the Vice President of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF) a coalition of student clubs at UVU. She spoke about rural Utah and that it is in an economic downturn.



Ms. Lacey Meyer speaks about rural Utah

The four primary ways to help are 1) The economy, encourage the diversification of job growth in STEM. 2) The education system needs to be bolstered in rural communities and in urban

education. 3) Partnering understands the complex issues that need to be solved. 4) Empowerment rural communities are strongly capable; the youth need to allow them to flourish.

It is easy to help; you can take action by attending events at the UVU. The small actions we take as youth will begin to build bigger actions which will lead to change.



Mr. Michael Hinatsu speaks about student's contribution to UN activities

The second speaker we heard from was Mr. Michael Hinatsu, Vice President of UIMF. The goal of UIMF is to raise awareness of mountain communities and targets looking forward. The team will be traveling to New York in March of 2020 for the 64th session. I thought this was very fascinating that we had a team that is traveling that far to promote awareness for the youth and women of the mountain people. Since 1994 the voice of the mountain people has been missing their voice. All the issues that encompass sustainable mountain development need to be brought to the forefront of the citizen's radar. It seems this will be a great event to propel the message of Mountains Matter for Youth.

Some of the other goals that were listed in the pamphlet were: “by 2030 protect and restore water-related ecosystems including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers, and lakes, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services.”

In conclusion, the mission of the UIMF is to raise awareness of mountain sustainability topics especially in Utah, to bring the public into contact with international guests and foreign dignitaries and finally to bring communities together to recognize their shared mountain heritage. I enjoyed the presentations that were given today. The presenters were concise and time-efficient. They got to the crux of the issues that are affecting the mountain people. I agree that the youth are the target audience for this issue. I think the youth in this day of age, many of them simply do not care about the mountain people. Even though they should, it just doesn't get their attention. I think events like this are an easy way to get the message out to the people.

Conner Schenk, UVU student