

My Contribution to the Orem Rotary Pancake Breakfast

The Orem Rotary Club held their annual Summerfest pancake breakfast June 12th, 2021. With an early 7 am call time, members of the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), a coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University and the Orem Rotary club gathered to prepare an unlimited pancake buffet for local communities of Orem City. This service project follows an established tradition which occurs every month between the Orem Rotarians and the UVU Rotaract student club. Because any member of the UIMF is welcome to join and contribute, I was given this opportunity to experience first hand being a part of the initiatives of the Rotarians.



(L to R): Dallas Karren, Andrew Caldwell, Fiance of Dylan Tweed, Dylan Tweed, and Alitha Thompson, UIMF members, awake and ready for work.

We quickly introduced each other and began to work together cutting bananas, preparing berry cups, and making pancake batter with homemade buttermilk syrup. The number of toppings made the presentation one of a kind.



Cholpon Akmatallieva, Orem Rotarian and Byan Alghanmi, UVU Rotaractor prepared over 10 buckets of sliced bananas!

We finished with perfect timing as people began to gather with hungry eyes. It took a brief second to get everyone on the same page, but a rhythm soon began between the cooks and the servers. There were many new Covid-19 food regulations which everyone was more than willing to follow. It was an amazing feeling to be able to work and interact with the community again.



The offerings for the best pancakes of the year

The cooks took the extra time to make Mickey Mouse pancakes for the children, which we drowned in syrup, and I topped with whip cream smiles and a banana nose. The children would giggle, and the parents seemed to relax. It made the atmosphere more of a gathering of friends rather than strictly a fundraiser.

The live band was an absolute treat. D.J. Smith, an Orem Rotarian, with his family band played classic western hits with some beautiful harmonies. Personally, I was tapping my feet in between the waves of patrons.

One of my favorite parts of this experience was being able to interact with many different individuals from many different paths. We had toddlers, who only wanted bananas, to retired navy war veterans. There was one young adult who appeared to have cerebral palsy. He would express what he wanted on his pancake by his level of excitement. I felt honored to be able to serve him.

With over 500 individuals served, it was a highly successful event both for the Orem Rotary Club, and for our student group. Our morning was topped off by singing happy birthday to Dallas Karren, UIMF President. I hope we didn't embarrass him too much.

Overall, I enjoyed the event more than I thought I would. It was such an uplifting experience and really refreshing after this last year of Covid-19 restrictions. I am looking forward to more service projects with the Orem Rotary Club in the future.

Alitha Thompson, President of Foreign Affairs Club