

Jane Goodall Calls Utah to Action

By [Carolyn Webber](#)
April 26, 2015

 (Photo by Kiffer Creveling)
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There are only a few 81-year-olds who spend 300 days traveling around the world each year. Renowned scientist Jane Goodall is one of them.

As a part of the Lyceum Lecture series hosted by the College of Humanities, Goodall came to Utah to speak to a sold-out audience of 1,200 people about her life and the planet’s current environmental problems.

During her presentation, Goodall said books like the Dr. Dolittle series and *Tarzan of the Apes* fueled her dream of studying animals in Africa. Once she got the offer to go to Kenya, she left everything and met Louis Leakey, a Kenyan paleoanthropologist, who got her started on chimpanzee research.

Along with stories about her field research with the chimps of Gombe, Goodall also spoke about Earth’s future concerning deforestation, shrinking amounts of usable water, pollution, climate change and the abuse of animals both in nature and on farms.

“It’s a pretty grim situation,” she said.

Goodall’s hope lies with the future generation, which is why she targeted youth and spoke about the efforts of her organization, Roots and Shoots, to combat environmental issues.

“What we do every day is making a difference and can make even more difference if we decide that we want to join in and try to do something about the problems that we humans have inflicted on the planet,” she said.

Robert Newman, dean of the college of humanities, said part of the reason Goodall came to Utah was to collaborate with the U in launching Roots and Shoots at local elementary, middle and high schools. The program works with youth to identify environmental issues in the community and how to take action.

Newman said he believes the biggest takeaway was the importance of a human-environment connection the public needs to maintain.

“We can’t be divorced from nature,” he said.

In addition to the event, Goodall spent Friday morning with students at the Salt Lake Science Center to review their science projects. Goodall said she enjoyed her time with the students and was happy to be in Utah.

“I’m excited. I’m glad I’m finally here,” she said.

Julia Restivo, a high school student from Denver, Colo. who flew in with her grandmother and mother to hear Goodall speak, described Goodall as “inspirational.”

“Her being a world-renowned female research scientist is so incredible and inspirational. That’s probably my favorite thing about her,” she said. “And that she’s not retired by now and still going after her goal.”

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