

NEWSLETTER

Altrusa International of the Central Coast, Inc
PO Box 5026, Santa Maria, CA 93456
www.districteleven.altrusa.org/central-coast



November 2025

Hello Altrusa Santas,

I hope you had a delightful Thanksgiving filled with family, food and football. I know my home enjoyed all three "F's"! Speaking of "F's", it is now time for the fourth "F", Festival of Trees! Our sponsors went beyond themselves this year and the trees are beautiful, labels are ready for printing and a new visual display of who/what/where of Festival of Trees is constantly being presented on the television above our work station in the rear of the store. Chuck Kossuth has really put together a cohesive presentation to disclose our rules, procedures and sponsors. Take a moment or two to view it.

Black Friday brought us a waiting crowd and sales were fairly steady all day long. Actually, the weekend proved to be a busy time at the mall. Weekdays are a bit slower but it all goes for a great community cause. On December 14th we will be having the tree raffle at our site in the mall. Chuck is working on having a live feed on YouTube (details to follow). I am currently working on the schedule of workers for that day so stay by your phones!!

And speaking of workers: Thank You Altrusa Members for stepping up to work for our only fundraiser. I know you cringe when you see my number display on your phones. Keep in mind that the hardest part of working a shift at FOT is just getting there! Once you're at the site it is quite enjoyable.

Happy Holidays to each and every one!

Nancy Voss



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

December: No Board/Business Meetings
December 14-FOT RAFFLE DAY
January 5-Board Meeting-Shaw's Tavern 6pm
January 12-Business Meeting-IHOP 6pm



NOVEMBER/DECEMBER/JANUARY

11/30-Betty Wolf
12/25-Raul Aguirre
1/15/26 Natalie Baldwin

Festival of Trees Business Meeting and Site Tour – November 10

Members attended a business meeting at the Festival of Trees on November 10, where we toured the event site and learned more about how we could help. We also had the opportunity to sign up for volunteer shifts and plan our participation in this festive community event. Chuck gave a presentation on new ways of using the Square and everyone agreed we need to pick up our step.

CLUB MEMBERSHIPS #1: our club is a member of the **Natural History Museum**. We pay yearly dues. So here is an invite to their FREE holiday open house on **December 7**. If a member attends please take pics and send/text/email to Melinda 805.448.6268 for the newsletter.



CLUB MEMBERSHIP #2: our club is a member of the **SANTA MARIA WOMENS NETWORK** which meets the *first Wednesday* of the month at the SM Country Club. Next meeting is **December 3**. They have a luncheon and members get to promote their business or non-profit. The lunch is \$40. Sign-in as Altrusa of the Central Coast.

CLUB MEMBERSHIP #3: our club is a member of the SM Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber will have a special Christmas Mixer at BMW & VW on Thursday **Dec 11th** from 5 to 7pm. FREE!

Members in the news

GUADALUPE DUNES

FUNDRAISER: On Sunday, 11/9, Leticia, Bea and Melinda attended the Guadalupe Dunes Center fundraiser held at **Guadalupe Social Club Wine Bar and Event Space**. It was a beautiful day and the wine and appetizers were delicious! Chuck Kossuth and his new gig, Charles & Chuck, played everyone's toe tapping music. We had a sing along to "Sweet Caroline" that was fun. There was an opportunity drawing and a 50/50 drawing. Leticia and Melinda won one of the "opportunity drawing" prizes. We had a chance to share **Altrusa** with our tablemates.



CELEBRATION OF TREES: our sister club, Altrusa Club of San Luis Obispo, Co. held their 16th Annual Celebration of Trees in Arroyo Grande on 11/15. There were about 25 trees displayed for one night and your ticket included a savory dinner. There were a silent auction and a live auction for wonderful items. We got to visit with other Altrusa clubs in our District Eleven and there were six past governors present at this holiday event.



TREE EXTRAVAGANZA: our other sister club, **Altrusa Club of Santa Maria** held their Tree Extravaganza Fundraiser on 11/22 at the Elks. Ticket included one Elks BBQ dinner. Our member Noe Mahelona volunteered to decorate the tree our club sponsored. If you sponsor a tree, you have the opportunity to purchase two tickets to the event. Noe did a beautiful job with the decorations!



SANTA MARIA WOMEN'S NETWORK AND GUADALUPE SOCIAL CLUB HOSTED SUCCESSFUL HOLIDAY NETWORKING MIXER, AND TOY DRIVE

November 13, 2025 – **The Santa Maria Women's Network** and the Guadalupe Social Club successfully hosted a collaborative holiday networking mixer offering community connections while supporting a local toy drive during the holiday season. The event was held at Guadalupe Social Club on November 13, 2025. Community members were invited to attend an evening of professional networking and holiday cheer. Admission was a new, unwrapped toy, all of which were donated to ensure children in the community have a bright holiday. Club member **Noe** attended!



LITERACY

Altrusa Expands Its Little Free Library Program

Altrusa of the Central Coast is proud to share that our Little Free Library initiative continues to flourish. We currently maintain **three Little Free Libraries** located at the Santa Maria Natural History Museum, Waller Park, and Los Alamos Park. Now, we are excited to announce that our **fourth Little Free Library** is in progress and will be placed at **Orcutt Community Park**. We are currently awaiting permits, and depending on the city's park plans, the site may also include a new bench for families to enjoy. Our club president, Nancy Voss, continues to guide us on this meaningful **literacy journey**, ensuring that every child in Santa Maria has access to books they can take home and cherish. With each Little Free Library we add, we move one step closer to building a community where reading is encouraged, supported, and celebrated.

75 Teen Books Donated to Veteran Families

Altrusa of the Central Coast is proud to share that **75 teen books** were recently donated to local veteran families. Club members **Dea** and **Leticia** worked diligently on this project, carefully cleaning each book and stamping them with our "Donated by Altrusa" stamp to prepare them for distribution. Our member Dea, who works closely with veteran families in our community, helped ensure these books reached households where they will be appreciated and enjoyed. This project reflects our ongoing commitment to literacy and to supporting those who have served our country.

SERVICE

RECURRING SERVICE PROJECTS: The following list are recurring monthly projects. Our club is always collecting **RX bottles** and **aluminum tabs**. Please bring them to our business meetings. Aluminum Tabs go to Stephanie and RX bottles go to Bea. Thank You!

HOPE VILLAGE-

This Christmas, the Sunday Ballas group is collecting small gifts and essential items to fill holiday stockings for the residents of **Hope Village** in Santa Maria. Nearly 40 women and 50 men currently live at Hope Village—individuals experiencing homelessness who will deeply appreciate a bit of warmth, care, and kindness this season. We invite our members to help us brighten their holidays by donating stocking-sized items such as **toiletries, warm socks, snacks, travel-size hygiene products, gloves, or small gifts**. Donations may be brought to the Festival of Trees (FOT) site during open hours. Every contribution, big or small, helps ensure that each resident of Hope Village receives a thoughtful holiday gift and a reminder that they are not forgotten. Thank you for joining us in spreading hope, compassion, and holiday cheer.





**NO KID SLEEPS
ON THE FLOOR
IN OUR TOWN!**

11/8-Sleep in Heavenly Peace Builds 100 Beds in Santa Maria at Home Depot:

On November 8, the Sleep in Heavenly Peace (SHP) bed build in Santa Maria brought the community together to make a real difference for children in need. With over 520 volunteers of all ages participating, the team successfully built 100 beds for local kids who were previously sleeping without one. The event, part of the **Serve Santa Maria** initiative, took place on a hot day, yet volunteers stayed energized and committed to the cause. Mayor Alice Patino also attended, showing her support for the community effort. Through teamwork, generosity, and sheer dedication, the volunteers of Santa Maria made sure 100 children now have a safe, comfortable place to sleep—a gift that truly changes lives. Thank you to the Altrusa Members that donated bedding and volunteered to build beds. **Next bed build is at Creations Coastal Financial – Community Build-Saturday, December 6, 2025-8:30-12noon; walk-ins welcome!** Sign up at: <https://shpbeds.org/chapter/ca-santa-barbara-co-n/>



This **Giving Tuesday**, we are excited to highlight **Educating for Menstrual Equity in Cambodia**, a project that brings menstrual health education to students who are eager to understand their bodies and strengthen their futures.

HOW DO I MAKE A DONATION? This Giving Tuesday, **December 2nd**, or any time this season, make your tax-deductible gift to the Altrusa International Foundation and help change someone's story for the better! To donate securely online using a debit card, credit card or bank account, click on this link or use the QR code: <https://foundation.altrusa.org/donate>.

****Days for Girls International introduces their new year-end campaign, [Illuminate Her](#), focusing on menstrual health and dignity, with a special opportunity for donors to have their contributions matched up to \$50,000. Go to: daysforgirls.org**

Altrusa Service: What, Why and How

Altrusa of the Central Coast is dedicated to hands-on service that strengthens our community.

What We Do:

We support literacy and families through Little Free Libraries, book donations, and volunteer projects.

Why We Serve:

We believe every child deserves a book and every family deserves support.

How We Help:

By working together, partnering with local groups, and taking action where it's needed most, we make a positive difference—one project at a time.

COMMUNICATIONS

Sunshine Committee-The Sunshine Chair is responsible for communicating, on behalf of the Altrusa Club, any get well wishes, condolences, sympathy, etc. to members needing a little Sunshine in their life. Sunshine examples might include reaching out to members who are sick, have had surgery, are in the hospital, lost a loved one, etc. Thank you to Stephanie for chairing this committee. Stephanie can be reached at 805-310-2263 or by email at 60mermaidstevie@gmail.com.

Newsletter Committee-If you have articles/pictures, please email to Melinda by the 25th of each month at: melinda.aguirre84@yahoo.com or text 805.448.6268

Website and Social-Media-You can visit our CLUB website at:

districteleven.altrusa.org/central-coast.

Check us out on face-book at our official page, Altrusa of the Central Coast.

District Service Bulletin-The DSB was emailed to all District Eleven members three times per year and contains DISTRICT ELEVEN updates. Make sure to read it and any other emails you receive from Altrusa International.

*You can find the district eleven website: districteleven.altrusa.org.

Altrusa International-**THE COMPASS** comes out every other month to ALL Altrusa Members and is filled with any changes, events and inspirations and can be found at the International Website: altrusa.org. **username:** Altrusan, **password:** MamieBass1955

Yearbook-The communications committee is working on our **club yearbook; expected by October 2025.**

Navigating the ALTRUSA Web... • Important websites to know!

www.altrusa.org (click Member Login in the upper right) *See above*

login.altrusa.org (go directly to the members area)

www.altrusastore.com (purchase Altrusa branded items including pins and banners)



DISTRICT ELEVEN NEWS

DISTRICT ELEVEN INFORMATION:

WHAT IS A NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Each year, during the January business meeting, the nominating committee will be created in order to propose a slate of officers for the upcoming year. Three members will serve on the committee. To serve as a member of the nominating committee, you must have served on the Club Board for a minimum of two years. As a member of the nominating committee, you are not allowed to be included in the proposed slate of officers. Nominations for committee members will come from the floor; the three members with the most votes will serve on the committee and the one with the most will serve as chair. Our board will review the procedures at the January 2026 board meeting at Shaw's Tavern, 6pm.

ALTRUSA INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT ELEVEN CONFERENCE
April 30-May 3- Avondale, Arizona

ALTRUSA INTERNATIONAL NEWS



UNITED NATIONS AND ALTRUSA HISTORY:

Since 1946, Altrusa International has held observer status at the United Nations (UN). At that time, Altrusa was the first international classified service club for then executive and professional women to have an official observer appointed to the United Nations, Frances K. Marquis, president of the New York City (NYC) Altrusa Club. Frances was a close friend to another active NYC Altrusan, Eleanor Roosevelt. **Eleanor Roosevelt** delivered an address at the 1945 San Francisco UN Conference on International Organization and later then President Harry S. Truman appointed Mrs. Roosevelt to Chair the famous UN Human Rights Committee. In 1978, our UN membership was assigned to the level of NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) in roster status within the ECOSOC (the Economic and Social Council). In this capacity, we join together with other NGOs, empowered to attend open General Assembly sessions and UN briefings/conferences related solely to global and social concerns, and receive UN Ground Passes. In each biennium, the International Board appoint 5 representatives to attend and monitor UN meetings and briefings, as allowed. Altrusa's representatives may participate (either in person or via teleconference/Facebook) in weekly briefings/chats, conducted by the UN Department of Global Communication (DGC), Civil Society.

CLUB FOUNDATION NEWS

FESTIVAL OF TREES:

Festival of Trees 2025: A Successful Move-In and Sponsor Night

On November 8 & 9, the Festival of Trees moved into its new location with the invaluable help of Altrusa members and Astra Righetti High School students. The event team prepped the room, fluffed 22 artificial trees with the help of Santa Maria FFA, and set up the ticket desk, printer, and computer. Tickets were cut and ready for sale.

On November 20, we hosted our Sponsor Open House, giving sponsors the first opportunity to purchase tickets for a chance to win a beautifully decorated tree. Guests enjoyed delicious desserts by Brenda Corona Daigle, wine from Costa de Oro and Stolpman, and festive Christmas music throughout the evening. With about 80 attendees, the night was a wonderful success, raising approximately \$1200 in ticket sales. A heartfelt thank you to all Altrusa members for their hard work and support in making the move-in and Sponsor Night so special! (*you know who you are!*)



Recognizing a Faithful Friend of the Festival of Trees:

Ed Carcarey has been a longtime supporter and faithful contributor to our Festival of Trees. In the last 15 years he has supplied fliers and posters, radio station Ads throughout our event, promotes FOT at the Chamber of Commerce Mixers, sends us 2-4 tree sponsors every year, this year he gave us a free (\$60) space at his new swap-meet for three days to promote FOT and as a “thank you” our club provides two fully decorated trees and gifts to his Festival of Lights parade event. For fifteen years, he has given us his time, talent, and heart to the Festival of Trees and we are profoundly grateful to him.

FOUNDATION BOARD News:

1. Next meeting is January 2026, date TBD. We will discuss disbursement of FOT money;
2. **Altrusa Int’l Annual Report** is due December 31 and Noe and Leticia will complete it.
3. FOT wrap-up dinner will be scheduled sometime in January 2026
4. Noe is working on updating the scholarship and grant applications so they can be uploaded on our website.

ASTRA CLUBS- sponsored by Altrusa of the Central Coast

NOVEMBER-ASTRA Club of RHS by Dayna

11/8-Saturday, November 8th, found Righetti ASTRA volunteering for the OASIS Holiday Market and Pancake Breakfast. Thank you to volunteers Miah Arrevalo Tovar, Kaiser Salvador, Abigail Santos, Ryan Silva, and John Snyder who did a great job helping with the event as well as Yaritza Perez who promoted Altrusa's Festival of Trees with Save the Date flyers and a fun holiday spinner game!



11/8-Righetti ASTRA participated in the November 8th, Serve Santa Maria event, that partnered with Sleep in Heavenly Peace, Home Depot, and United Rentals to make 100 beds for 3–17 year-olds who do not have a bed. It was a great day for the over 500 volunteers who made it happen, and Righetti ASTRA was proud to be a small part of that!



10/27-11/14: Righetti Annual Food Drive; donations of food collected by ASTRA members to give to those less fortunate

11/3-11/21: Righetti Wellness Club Animal Shelter Drive; ASTRA RHS collected and donated dog/cat treats for the local animal shelter

11/7: Oakley school's Fall Festival; 12 ASTRA members helped with the festival;

11/15-Saturday found Righetti ASTRA hosting Thanksgiving Crafts at the Orcutt Library. Volunteers Soleil Blouin, Braden Collins, Natalia Hernandez, Yaritza Perez, and Diana Vences did an amazing job with all the children including a Girl Scout Troupe that showed up!



11/15-Righetti ASTRA received a special gift at their Orcutt Library Thanksgiving Crafts event! The Owens/Rash family are one of our favorite families attends our monthly events for the past few years and they presented us with a donation to our Righetti ASTRA Club! President, Soleil Blouin accepted the check and thanked them for their generosity!



11/20/25- Righetti ASTRA participated at the Guadalupe School District's Reading and Literacy Festival on November 20th at Mary Buren School. Volunteers Judith Arevalo, Christian Curiel, Daniela Espinoza, Nadya Rosas, and Diana Vences (all attended Guadalupe schools) gave away free books from the Righetti book drive, did a fun spinner game, and spoke to the audience about ASTRA and Altrusa's Festival of Trees. A great time for all involved! Astra Club of Righetti.



11/20-Righetti ASTRA members Devina Martinez and Natalie Valenzuela were awarded the October Golden Warrior Award Certificate and Pin at the November 20th ASTRA Meeting. Devina and Natalie are true team players always willing to volunteer at any event and have done some amazing social media projects for our ASTRA Club!



NOVEMBER-ASTRA Club of AHC by Melinda

11/7-ASTRA AHC Meeting –

At their November 7 meeting, ASTRA AHC members assembled 25 hygiene kits for individuals experiencing homelessness at the Good Samaritan Emergency Shelter. Each kit was thoughtfully packed with essential items meant to support a person's basic needs and provide comfort during challenging times. This annual project is an important tradition for the club, reflecting ASTRA's commitment to service, compassion, and community outreach.



11/8-ASTRA AHC Volunteers Help Build 100 Beds with Sleep in Heavenly Peace

ASTRA AHC students **Nathan, Sam, Vincent and Adam** proudly volunteered at the **Sleep in Heavenly Peace bed build** held at Home Depot in Santa Maria. It was an exceptionally hot day, but that didn't stop the community — **520 volunteers** showed up to take part in this inspiring service event. Working from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, the ASTRA volunteers played a key role in the build, performing most of the **drilling for the bed frames**. By the end of the event, the group successfully constructed **100 beds**, ensuring that local children in need will have a safe and comfortable place to sleep. This hands-on project highlights ASTRA AHC's commitment to serving the community and supporting organizations that make a real difference for families.



11/24-ASTRA AHC Represented at Monthly Inter-Club Council Meetings

ASTRA AHC member **Manuel** attends the **Inter-Club Council (ICC)** meetings once a month, serving as the club's liaison to the wider campus community. At each meeting, he shares what ASTRA is about, highlights our ongoing service projects, and keeps other student organizations informed about opportunities to collaborate. By maintaining this connection, ASTRA ensures that when we take on a major project, the ICC can help **spread the word**, increase visibility, and support our efforts. Manuel's leadership strengthens ASTRA's presence on campus and helps build meaningful partnerships that enhance our impact.

NOVEMBER-ASTRA CLUB OF PVHS by Melinda and Tyler

Astra PVHS: Nearly 20 Years of Youth Leadership and Community Service

Astra PVHS has been a proud part of our community since **2007**, when Melinda, Lorene, and Jackie B. founded the club with a vision of empowering young people to serve. Among the first to join was charter member Tyler Dickinson, helping set the foundation for what would become one of our most active and enduring youth service groups. Over the years, Astra members have contributed thousands of volunteer hours through meaningful projects. Their service has included supporting the Autism Walk, making blankets for the Cancer Center, giving away books to local children, assisting each year with the Festival of Trees, and sorting fresh vegetables and fruit at the Food Bank every Saturday—just a few highlights among a long list of projects that continue to make a real difference. As Astra PVHS approaches its 20th anniversary in 2027, we celebrate the dedication, leadership, and compassion of these young volunteers. We are deeply grateful to the Altrusa Club and the Altrusa Foundation for their consistent support, guidance, and belief in the power of youth service. Together, we've helped build a strong legacy of giving back—and the best is yet to come.

11/5/25-Cinderella and the Wicked Step Sisters made an appearance during our monthly Book giveaway and “make and take” craft event. ASTRA PV gave away 100 books and helped “littles” make a foam or sticker craft and washable/removable tattoos.



11/08/25- Astra PVHS Volunteers Help Build 100 Beds for Local Kids

Twelve Astra members from Pioneer Valley High School rolled up their sleeves at the Sleep in Heavenly Peace “Serve Santa Maria” bed-build held at Home Depot. Working alongside community volunteers, the students helped build 100 beds for children in need. For four hardworking hours, the Astra teens sanded wood, pulled stickers off boards, measured pieces, and persevered through the heat—all to ensure local kids have a safe, comfortable place to sleep. One of the highlights of the day was getting to “brand” the headboards with the Sleep in Heavenly Peace logo, leaving a meaningful mark on their work. We are proud of these dedicated young volunteers for giving their time, energy, and heart to a project that will make a lasting difference for families in our community.



11/7-Astra PVHS Spreads Holiday Cheer to Seniors

Astra students from Pioneer Valley High School are bringing smiles to local seniors this holiday season. Members are filling out 50 Christmas cards for residents in skilled nursing facilities, adding warm messages and cheerful holiday wishes. The completed cards will be returned at the December 5 meeting before being delivered to the seniors. This simple act of kindness means so much—many seniors rarely receive mail, and they truly cherish thoughtful cards from young people. Astra’s participation helps brighten their day and reminds them that they are remembered and cared for during the holidays. We’re proud of these students for continuing to spread compassion in our community.

11/15: FOT Sponsor Table: A big thank-you to the Astra Club of Pioneer Valley! Eleven dedicated volunteers showed up on Saturday to support our Festival of Trees Sponsor Table. These teens worked nonstop—manning the sponsor snack table, helping sponsors unload their cars, guiding them to their assigned trees, checking them in, assisting with decorating, and even handling clean-up and garbage removal. We are truly grateful for these young volunteers who gave up their Saturday to make the day run smoothly.



11/23/25-Elks held their annual Craft Faire on Sunday 11/23. Mr. Dickinson texted ASTRA Members of a volunteer opportunity to help at the craft faire. Thank you Tyler for sharing this wonderful opportunity!



CLUB BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nancy Voss	President
Maria Castillo	Vice President
Stephanie Stadtmiller	Secretary
Sunday Ballas	Treasurer
Leticia Kossuth	Director
Noe Mahelona	Director
Patty Elswick	Immediate Past President

FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Leticia Kossuth	President
Raye Zelaya	Vice President
Kim Tito	Treasurer
Melinda Aguirre	Secretary
Bea Goyette	Director
Noe Mahelona	Director

COMMITTEES

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE: Chair: Leticia; Committee: Maria, Melinda

LITERACY/SERVICE COMMITTEE: Chair: Nancy; committee: Norma, Sunday

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE: Chair: Stephanie, Melinda

ASTRA OF RHS ADVISORS: Dayna DeBernardi Watson

ASTRA OF PVHS ADVISORS: Melinda Aguirre and Tyler Dickinson

ASTRA of AHC ADVISOR: Melinda Aguirre