

NEWSLETTER

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



FEBRUARY 2026

Hello Members,

February has stormed out bringing us “March”ing into a busy time. Grants and Scholarships will be reviewed and service projects will continue to get our helping hand. If there are any service projects that you feel passionate about, please bring it to the club’s attention. We would like to support our fellow members with camaraderie: physically and/or monetarily. We ARE a service and literacy minded club. April is our program month and if anyone has any suggestions, for a program, please make it known to the board or bring your ideas to the business meeting. Our Santa Maria community has so much to offer and we need to keep ourselves informed.

Wishing you all good health and see you at the business meeting March 9th at Olive Garden.

Nancy



IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:

Mar 2-Board Meeting-El Palenque, 6pm

Mar 2- Dr Seuss Birthday

Mar 9-Bus. Meeting-Olive Garden, 6pm

April 6-Board Meeting-Magic Dragon

April 13- Bus. Meeting w/guest speaker



March/April

3/4- Dea Cunningham

3/13-Melinda Aguirre

4/1-Nancy Voss

4/3-Elizabeth Vasquez

4/12-Gail Brown

4/29-Patty Elswick

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Whether you're a brand-new member or a seasoned Altrusan, your story matters. Let us highlight *you* and celebrate the incredible people behind our mission of literacy, service, and leadership. Please send your bio to Newsletter Editor: melinda.aguirre84@yahoo.com

LITERACY:

Leticia Kossuth and Dayna D. Watson have been instrumental in setting up this small library at Mary Buren Elementary School in Guadalupe Resource Center. This literacy project is a testament to their dedication and commitment to fostering literacy among the students.



LETHA H BROWN AWARD: A special thank you to [Nancy Voss](#) for preparing and submitting the Letha H. Brown Literacy Award application highlighting our Little Free Libraries project for the 2026 District Eleven Conference. Nancy thoughtfully captured the heart of this project and its impact on promoting literacy in our community. Through the Little Free Libraries initiative, books are made accessible to individuals and families, encouraging reading, sharing, and lifelong learning. We are grateful to Nancy for her time, dedication, and commitment to showcasing our club's literacy efforts at the district level. Your hard work helps shine a light on the meaningful difference our members continue to make!

ALTRUSA HISTORY: The **Letha H. Brown Literacy Award** was established by the International Board of Directors of Altrusa in **July 1993** to honor **Letha H. Brown**, a Past International President who played a key role in making literacy a major organizational focus. In **1977**, Letha H. Brown introduced literacy as a central service emphasis for Altrusa, encouraging clubs worldwide to engage in meaningful literacy work in their communities. Altrusa in San Diego invited Letha to membership in 1956. Ever since, she has exemplified the true Altrusa spirit, serving the organization whenever, however and wherever she was asked to do so.

SERVICE

Altrusa History: Authorization: The Mamie L. Bass Service Award was authorized by the International Executive Committee in July, 1963 as a memorial to the first national president of Altrusa. The name was changed to Mamie L. Bass Service Award in July, 1975. (Board of Directors, 1975) The criteria and procedures for submitting entries and judging the projects were amended in 1977. (Board of Directors, 1977)

Mamie L Bass Service Award: A heartfelt thank you to our dedicated Altrusa member, [Sunday Ballas](#), for preparing and submitting the Mamie L. Bass Service Award application highlighting Hope Village for the 2026 District Eleven Conference. Sunday's commitment to service and her thoughtful work in showcasing the impact of Hope Village truly reflect the spirit of Altrusa. Because of her efforts, the meaningful work being done to support individuals and families in need will be recognized at the district level. We are grateful for your leadership, Sunday, and for representing our club with excellence and heart.

RECURRING SERVICE PROJECTS: The following list are recurring monthly projects. Our club is always collecting **RX bottles, aluminum tabs and bedding for Sleep in Heavenly Peace**. Please bring them to our business meetings. Aluminum tabs go to [Stephanie](#)- RX bottles go to [Bea](#)-and [Melinda](#) gets the bedding. Thank You!



NO KID SLEEPS
ON THE FLOOR
IN OUR TOWN!

On February 21, Bea and Melinda proudly represented our club while volunteering at Sleep in Heavenly Peace in San Luis Obispo. This incredible organization is dedicated to building and delivering beds to children in need so that *no child sleeps on the floor*. Bea cheerfully manned the snack table, keeping volunteers fueled and energized throughout the morning. Melinda worked diligently sanding bed frames from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, helping prepare each piece for assembly. The impact of the day was truly inspiring — more than 150 volunteers came together to build 100 beds for local children. It was a powerful reminder of what can be accomplished when a community unites for a meaningful cause. Thank you, Bea and Melinda, for your time, hard work, and dedication to making a difference!



Next bed build is Saturday, March 21 at 9am in Lompoc. Lompoc Rotary is sponsoring this Community Build Day to build 60 beds for local kids in need. Pre-registration is greatly appreciated! Walk-ins are welcome but pre-registering makes check-in so much. REGISTER HERE: <https://shpbeds.org/chapter/ca-santa-barbara-co-n/>

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*

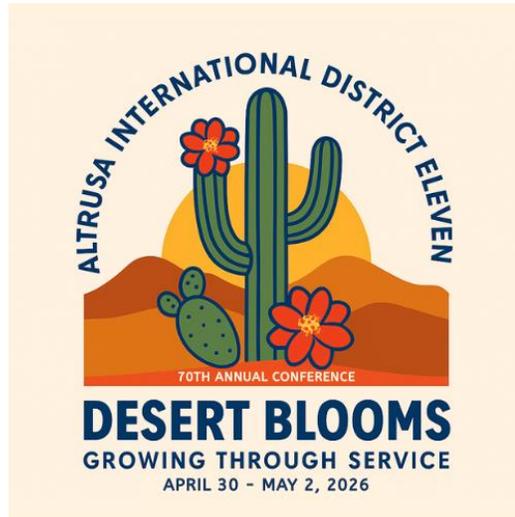
login.altrusa.org (go directly to the members area)

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



DISTRICT ELEVEN NEWS

DISTRICT ELEVEN INFORMATION:



Call to Conference 2026 “Growing through Service” DSB was emailed to all Altrusa Members in District Eleven. Club Presidents are asked to prepare for conference as well as Altrusa Members. Book your room. Travel by plane, train, or car.



ALTRUSA INTERNATIONAL

New member recruitment is from February 14-April 30.



Principles of Altrusa

Altrusa is a builder of men and women.

Altrusa is an expression of the search for the best in character, in business, and in citizenship.

Election to Altrusa is evidence of confidence which imposes upon the recipient the obligation to strive to be true to the highest standards of life in his or her personal and business relations.

Altrusa in the very derivation of her name is committed to the philosophy of unselfishness, of the joy of giving rather than getting, and to the search for that happiness which is based upon spiritual worthiness.

Altrusa is practical idealism. Its service consists, not in saying great things, but in the daily earnest practice of its principles.

Altrusa commends to its members an active interest in public affairs, realizing that the State is but the individual writ large.

Altrusa develops true leadership, concerned with accomplishment and not with recognition.

Membership carries with it no obligation to transact business with other members. It makes no promise of returns in any commercial specie. Its rewards are in proportion to the loyalty, the unselfishness and character of the member, and the coin of the realm cannot equal its value.

Altrusa expresses good will for all mankind. It emphasizes the good and lets the evil sink into the oblivion it merits.

Altrusa is democratic; it knows no class, no favorites, but is founded upon merit alone.

Altrusa believes that the way to progress lies not in emphasizing the faults of people and their failure to give proper recognition, at times, to people in business, but rather in arousing people to their responsibilities and their possibilities, so that their accomplishments will blaze the trail for greater things.

Altrusa believes it is not enough to be good; Altrusa must be good for something. Each member must be doing the piece of work that is theirs in a way that puts them in the front ranks of accomplishment.

– Mamie Luella Bass

” Historical Altrusa material as written in 1921/Adopted at Altrusa’s fourth convention in Dayton, Ohio, in 1921”

CLUB FOUNDATION NEWS

FOUNDATION BOARD:

Next Meeting is held on: 4/20/26

International Foundation Project Grants Information

ABOUT THE GRANTS PROGRAM

The Grants Program provides financial support to Altrusa Clubs, ASTRA Clubs, and Altrusa Districts for independent community service projects. Projects must aim to improve the educational, economic, and quality of life outcomes for communities.

Note:

- Grant funds may not be used for fundraising events or to support another organization's fundraising activities (no pass-through funding).
- Only Altrusa-affiliated organizations (Clubs, Districts, ASTRA Clubs) are eligible to apply.

GRANT CYCLES AND DEADLINES

There are two grant cycles each fiscal year (June 1-May 31):

- Cycle One: Application deadline – September 15; the Club 52 funding focus is international healthcare and educational initiatives.
- Cycle Two: Application deadline – **March 15**; the Club 52 funding focus is camps for children with disabilities or affected by disease.

About Disaster Relief Aid- (our club has been awarded three disaster relief grants)

Disaster Relief Aid is available from the Altrusa International Foundation as needed. The International Foundation shall respond to disasters specific to Districts. Monies from this fund may go to another relief agency to enhance overall first responders' efforts.

Requests for disbursements from this fund shall be initiated by a written request from a District Governor to the International Foundation.

Disaster Relief Aid is available year-round. Along with the application, applicants should:

- Provide a narrative describing the need and project in 500 words or less, including an estimated number of recipients affected. Disaster Relief Aid should benefit at least 100 community members.
- The application must also include the name of the non-profit for which the Disaster Relief Aid is requested along with the statement from the nonprofit that describes the need. Requests less than \$2,500 may be approved by the Foundation Chair. Requests exceeding \$2,500 are welcome and will be reviewed and approved by the Foundation Board of Trustees.

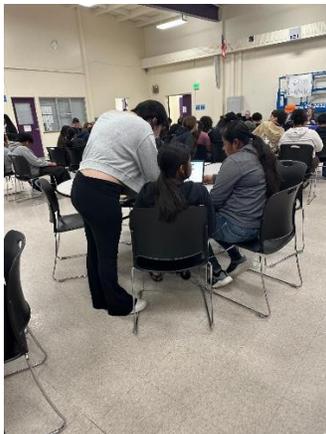
ASTRA CLUBS- sponsored by Altrusa of the Central Coast

February-ASTRA Club of RHS by Dayna

2/14-Righetti ASTRA had a great turnout for their February 14th, Valentine's Day Crafts Event, held at the Orcutt library. ASTRA members Jackie Gallardo, Nathalia Hernandez, Lilibeth Lopez, Adriana Madrigal, Bella Pacheco, Hugo Penuelas, Rose Evans and Abigail Santos did an amazing job helping the kids make Valentine lanterns, signs, teddy bears, and good old-fashioned cards!



Many Righetti ASTRA members volunteered their time helping with the **Incoming Class of 2030 Registration Nights** at Righetti and Guadalupe Junior High. Members did a great job helping and welcoming the over 800 students with registration and with providing childcare while parents completed the registration.



Righetti ASTRA members Judith Arevalo, Abigail Santos, Daniela Espinoza, Diana Vences, and Christian Curiel were awarded the Golden Warrior Award for their service in ASTRA, especially serving their Guadalupe community where they have participated in many literacy events this year!



February-ASTRA Club of AHC by Melinda

2/4-Bulldog Bow-Wow – ASTRA AHC members Melinda and Adam proudly represented our club at the Bull Dog Bow Wow event on February 4. With a festive Valentine's theme, their table was decorated in cheerful red and pink while they handed out ASTRA AHC materials and Valentine bead necklaces to attendees. The event provided a wonderful opportunity to network and mingle with community members while sharing information about ASTRA's mission and service projects. Five new ASTRA applications were received



2/19-Good Samaritan Afterschool Program-On February 19, ASTRA at Allan Hancock College stepped into service with a meaningful visit to the Good Samaritan Afterschool Program. From 3:30–4:30 p.m., our members participated in a meet and greet with the students and their teacher, Ms. Hernandez, beginning what promises to be a wonderful partnership. Our members had the opportunity to learn more about the students, the program's needs, and how ASTRA can provide ongoing support. Ms. Hernandez warmly welcomed the club and expressed sincere gratitude for the willingness of our students to invest their time and energy into the children's growth and success. We are excited to share that ASTRA AHC has committed to volunteering once a month on the third Thursday of each month. During these visits, members will assist students with homework, lead a simple craft activity, and spend time reading with the children.



2/20-Blankets for Pets-On February 20, the ASTRA Club at Allan Hancock College gathered for a hands-on working meeting. Members rolled up their sleeves and focused on a special project: creating comfort for animals waiting for their forever homes at the Santa Barbara County Animal Services. Members made eight beautiful fleece no-sew blankets to donate to the shelter. Each blanket was carefully measured, cut, and tied by hand.



SNACKS FOR JUVENILE HALL: ASTRA AHC continues to support youth at Juvenile Hall through our ongoing Snack Incentive project. Every two months, members donate and deliver snacks as a positive reinforcement reward for the boys. Most recently, 80 snacks were distributed. The impact of this simple act of kindness has been meaningful. The juvenile boys expressed their appreciation by writing a heartfelt thank-you letter, sharing that receiving the snacks encouraged them to do better and make positive choices.



HISTORY: The **ASTRA Club Service Award** has been established by Altrusa International and sponsored by Altrusa International Foundation to encourage ASTRA Clubs to actively participate in service projects designed to meet specific needs in the local community or within their own school community. This award is an opportunity for Altrusa International to recognize outstanding ASTRA Clubs for their achievements in service.

ASTRA AHC AWARD ABSTRACT-By Vincent and Nathan- ASTRA AHC launched the **“Juvenile Justice Center Snack Incentive Project”** to support approximately 34 youth at the Santa Barbara County Juvenile Justice Center. The project’s primary objective is to provide positive reinforcement, an important resource currently not sufficiently seen in such facilities. Snack packs were used as incentives for attending group sessions, journaling, and participating in discussions. Members collect, purchase, and package donated snacks which included encouraging notes during a bi-monthly meeting. The project successfully increased engagement and motivation among residents while teaching ASTRA members leadership, empathy, and the power of positive reinforcement in preventing future offenses.

February-ASTRA CLUB OF PVHS by Melinda and Tyler

2/18/2026-Astra PVHS recently hosted a fun-filled outreach event at the mall. With the help of 10 amazing student volunteers, we welcomed approximately 90 children and families. The kids enjoyed a variety of hands-on activities, including a craft station making crowns, beads, and sticker scenes. One of the highlights of the event was giving away 90 books to every child that attended.



2/21-SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE: On February 12, six ASTRA PVHS students participated in a bed build with Sleep in Heavenly Peace in San Luis Obispo. With the support of their parents, who provided transportation, the students joined over 150 volunteers to help build 100 beds for children in need. Hosted at The Home Depot, the students sanded, assembled, and worked together to ensure that local children who do not have a bed of their own will have a safe and comfortable place to sleep.



ASTRA PVHS AWARD Synopsis "International Literacy Day" By Gaby and Ivonne:

ASTRA of Pioneer Valley High School celebrated **International Literacy Day** at the Santa Maria Town Center by distributing 90 free books and 90 activity bags filled with take-home crafts. The project's goal was to increase access to literacy materials for local families, particularly those who may not be able to afford books. Ten members assembled the kits on-site and engaged families in both English and Spanish. The event strengthened community connections, promoted early reading, and provided members with meaningful leadership and service experience.

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, Nancy, Melinda

ASTRA OF RHS ADVISORS: Dayna DeBernardi Watson

ASTRA OF PVHS ADVISORS: Melinda Aguirre and Tyler Dickinson

ASTRA of AHC ADVISOR: Melinda Aguirre