

# NEWSLETTER

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



**MARCH 2026**

Hello Everyone,

April has crept up upon us and Easter is on the horizon. Hope everyone is staying healthy with all of the weather changes we have experienced lately.

Our April meeting will celebrate the 109th birthday of Altrusa with cake and ice cream. NO meal will be provided so grab a bite before the meeting.

We are asking each member to bring a wrapped white elephant gift valued at about \$10. It can be something around you home or if so inclined, it can be purchased.

The end of April is our District Eleven Conference in Avondale, Arizona. If you are planning to attend, please get your registration forms in.

A few of us attended the conference last year in San Diego and found it very enlightening. Such dynamic members in one location sharing their ideas, thoughts, wins & losses. You truly come away with inspirations.

We want to thank 805BuncoBabes for their generous donation of gently used books. At their March bunco gala, they collected books for our club. We have received these books, stamped them and they are ready for distribution. Now we need to get some activities on the calendar. Grab a project form, fill it out, have it reviewed by the board first and go promote our club. Our club has tables, tablecloths and canopies for your projects. Projects need prior board approval. Wishing you all a very Hoppy Easter and see you at the birthday party!!

Nancy  
President

## 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](mailto:melinda.aguirre84@yahoo.com)

**STUDENT STORE:** Last year we had the opportunity to volunteer at the Ralph Dunlap Elementary School Student Store for one week and they asked us back. YAY! The store is opened during lunch breaks and is maintained by the 6<sup>th</sup> grade leadership club and we serve as support for the students. **Gail, Stephanie and Nancy** volunteered 2 hours every day for a week to monitor the activity. Students have a variety of school items and activity items to choose from and purchase. The best part is that our club receives 20% of the net proceeds which is about \$230. The school PTA had first options and turned it down.



### **HISTORY: Altrusa International, Inc. (Altruism + U.S.A.)**

**Celebrate Altrusa's 109th anniversary in April** -The Altrusa Institute was founded in 1917 in Nashville as a women's civic organization by Dr. Alfred Durham. In Indianapolis where Dr. Durham formed a chapter, he met Mamie L. Bass who had served as Superintendent of the Women's Division of the U.S. Employment Service.

Ms. Bass envisioned a higher purpose for Altrusa as a "builder of women." She renamed the organization the National Association of Altrusa Clubs and wrote by-laws and principles for the organization. The first Altrusa convention was held in June 1918 in Indianapolis.

Vocational education for women was a national cause of the organization. One of the early members was former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. By 1935, Altrusa chapters began to form outside of the U.S., hence another change of name to Altrusa International, Inc.

In 1962, Altrusa International established the Altrusa International Foundation, which is dedicated to improving economic well-being and quality of life through a commitment to community services and literacy.

Altrusa is now an international association of women and men who volunteer their energies and expertise in projects dedicated to community betterment. As a community service organization, Altrusans provide over one million volunteer hours every year.

**Celebrating Women in Service – International Women’s Day-**In honor of International Women’s Day, we celebrate the dedicated women of Altrusa International of the Central Coast who continually volunteer their time, talents, and compassion to strengthen our community. Through literacy initiatives, youth mentoring, service projects, and support for local organizations, Altrusa women make a meaningful difference in the lives of others. Their efforts reflect a shared commitment to service, leadership, and education. Whether collecting books, preparing resources for youth programs, or assisting community partners, these volunteers demonstrate the power of women working together for the greater good. International Women’s Day reminds us to recognize the achievements of women everywhere and to appreciate the many ways they uplift and inspire their communities. The women of this Altrusa Club continue this tradition of service by leading with generosity, compassion, and a passion for making a positive impact.



**Birthdays for April/May:**

**April 1** Nancy Voss

**April 3** Elizabeth Vasquez

**April 12** Gail Brown

**April 29** Patty Elswick

**May 10** Noe Mahelona,

**May 14** Maria Castillo

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS:**

**4/6-**Board Meeting

**4/13-**Business meeting @ Betty Baxter Home 535 Jasmine 93455

**4/11-**Add an Altrusan Day and Altrusa’s Anniversary

**5/4-**Board Meeting-Chef Rick’s 6pm

**5/11-**Business Meeting- IHOP 6pm



## Expand on Success

One of the biggest threats to success is success itself.

When you get a little bit ahead, it's all too easy to become complacent and to quickly lose what you have gained.

To avoid that complacency, respond to success with gratitude and humility.

See your success not as a reward, but as an opportunity.

If you merely consume your good fortune, it leaves you with nothing but a bitter and wistful taste in your mouth.

Instead, seize the opportunity to expand and build on your success.

The real joy of accomplishment is in the doing.

To continue the joy, continue the doing.

Let the small victories become steps on the path to an even bigger victory.

Let the big victories become steps on the path to an even more grand achievement.

Make each success into a starting point.

And there is no limit to where you can go.

-- Ralph Marston

## LITERACY:

### LITERACY BOOK CHALLENGE FROM INT'L PRESIDENT CHRIS DEVLIGER:

President Chris is continuing the ONE BOOK AT A TIME challenge, and we can all be a part of this worthy endeavor! Her goal is for Altrusans to distribute 1,000,001 books throughout the world and /or devote 500,000 literacy service hours to our communities during the 2025-2027 biennium. How can we participate?

1. Develop a literacy project or expand one in our community (*Little Free Libraries!*)
2. Assign a record keeper to keep track of the number of books distributed and/or the service hours dedicated to your literacy project (*Nancy keeps count*)
3. Continue the project into next year (*we have another little free library in the works*)
4. Send your number to the international service committee before June 1 2026. Use the entry form on the international website to record each time you donate books (*have your record keeper log in and scroll down to the book challenge for the form*)
5. Spread the love of reading throughout your community and around the world.

**OUR LITTLE FREE LIBRARIES:** Our club is proud to support literacy in the community through three Little Free Library locations. These small neighborhood book exchanges allow community members to take a book, share a book, and enjoy reading at no cost. The libraries provide easy access to books for children, families, and readers of all ages. To help keep the libraries well stocked and welcoming, club member **Nancy Voss** regularly replenishes them with donated books. Nancy visits the libraries weekly and/or biweekly to organize the shelves, add new titles, and ensure there are always books available for the community. This ongoing effort helps promote literacy and encourages a love of reading throughout the neighborhood. Our Little Free Libraries continue to be a simple yet powerful way our members support learning and sharing within the community.



SM Natural History Museum



Waller Park



Los Alamos Park

## SERVICE

**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!



### MATTHEW 25 MINISTRIES: RX BOTTLES

#### Why this matters-

- In some countries, patients might otherwise receive pills wrapped in scraps of paper or loose, which **doesn't protect the medication from moisture or contamination**. Clean plastic bottles provide a **safe, durable, and child-resistant container**.
- The program also helps **keep these hard plastic bottles out of regular trash** where they are difficult to recycle through typical curbside systems.

#### Where they typically go

- Bottles collected locally (through churches, schools, community groups, etc.) are **mailed or delivered to Matthew 25 Ministries' facility in Blue Ash/Cincinnati, Ohio**, where they are sorted and prepared for distribution.



Members of Altrusa of the Central Coast proudly volunteered at the Sleep in Heavenly Peace bed build held on **March 21**, joining a remarkable community effort to serve local children in need. A total of 150 volunteers came together for the event, including participants from Vandenberg Space Force Base, all working side by side to build 65 beds. In a truly meaningful show of community support, the Rotary Club of Lompoc marked their 100-year anniversary not with a traditional celebration, but by investing in this impactful project. Their decision to dedicate funds toward building beds reflects a shared commitment to service and improving the lives of others. Melinda is now a "redshirt" volunteer; she helps with check-in table. **Next bed build May 16 at Chumash**



## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://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](http://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](http://altrusa.org). **username:** Altrusan, **password:** MamieBass1955

**Yearbook**-The communications committee continues to update the yearbook

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

[www.altrusa.org](http://www.altrusa.org) (click Member Login in the upper right) *See above*

[login.altrusa.org](http://login.altrusa.org) (go directly to the members area)

[www.altrusastore.com](http://www.altrusastore.com) (purchase Altrusa branded items including pins and banners)



## DISTRICT ELEVEN NEWS

### DISTRICT ELEVEN INFORMATION:



ALL Conference info is in the DSB! How does our club participate? We participate in the Foundation by donating **silent auction and raffle** items, we place an **AD** in the program, **Marketplace** where we share our talents and proceeds benefit our club and joining in the Fun and Fitness with Sandi Pfeffercorn's chair yoga or you can be there in spirit and make a donation.



We have two Altrusa Members that have reached a **club year milestone**: **Raul Aguirre, 5 years and Bea Goyette, 20 years! Thank you!**

## ALTRUSA INTERNATIONAL NEWS

***Love Bigger  
Lead Stronger  
Leave a Legacy***



**2026 International  
Membership Challenge**  
February 1 – April 30, 2026

**Initiate new members  
10 Clubs Win \$100!**

*#LoveLiteracyLegacy  
#AltrusaMembershipChallenge*



**ALTRUSA** International | *Leading to a Better Community*

## SPONSOR PINS INFORMATION (taken from the February Compass)

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### Growing Altrusa...New Sponsor Pins


Altrusa is introducing new sponsor pins to recognize members who recruit new members. The silver pin will be awarded for sponsoring the first new member during the biennium, while the gold pin will be presented upon sponsoring five new members. Members who sponsor ten new members will receive the Growing Altrusa pin, with a colored gemstone added for every subsequent ten members sponsored.

Credits for members sponsored prior to June 1, 2025, will be retained. The new Growing Altrusa heart pins will replace the previously distributed even-numbered pins (2, 4, 6, or 8) at District Conferences, though members may continue to wear their existing pins if they wish. Distribution of the new pins is retroactive to June 1, 2025, and will continue through May 31, 2029.

We encourage all Altrusans to participate and support President Chris' goal of every member sponsoring at least one new member this biennium.



**Silver Heart Pin Awarded for 1st  
Member Sponsored**



**Gold Heart Pin Awarded for 5th  
Member Sponsored**

## UNITED NATIONS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ALTRUSA CONTINUES THIS BIENNIUM SO HERE ARE A FEW KEY DATES THE CLUBS CAN USE AS A SERVICE PROJECT:

1. March 7-World Wildlife Day: sponsor an endangered animal or organize a local clean up, plant native species, plant a tree in someone's honor
2. March 30- International day of Zero Waste: sponsor a recycling project, organize a clean-up of a local beach, park or river, create recycling composting posters with local student groups.
3. April 2 - World Autism Awareness Day: Promotes understanding and acceptance of individuals with autism.
4. April 7 - World Health Day: Focuses on global health issues and encourages healthy living.
5. April 22 - Earth Day: Highlights environmental protection and sustainability efforts worldwide.
6. April 23 - World Book Day: Celebrates reading, publishing, and copyright.

## CLUB FOUNDATION NEWS

**FOUNDATION BOARD:** Next Meeting: TBD: they will review grants + scholarships.

**FESTIVAL OF TREES:** Meeting to be determined by FOT Co-chairs, Noe and Sunday.

## ASTRA CLUBS- sponsored by Altrusa of the Central Coast

### March-ASTRA Club of RHS by Dayna

**3/6-Righetti ASTRA** members Samantha Fernandez, Lilibeth Lopez, Nicholas Matautia, Yaritza Perez, Natalia Serna, and Diana Vences along with Advisor Dayna DeBernardi-Watson read to students at Oakley Elementary School on March 6<sup>th</sup> in celebration of **Read Across America Day!** Volunteers read to multiple grade level classes throughout the morning. A fun and enjoyable event for all in promoting literacy!



**3/10-WARRIOR WELCOME:** Righetti ASTRA participated in the Warrior Welcome event on Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>. Warrior Welcome is an annual event for Righetti to showcase what they offer to incoming freshman “Warriors” and their parents. ASTRA members Yaritza Perez, Natalia Serna, Santiago Jimenez, Lilibeth Lopez, and Diana Vences had fun telling families about ASTRA along with playing some fun games! They created quite a list of prospective members with a QR code interest questionnaire



Righetti ASTRA members John Snyder, Miah Arevalo Tovar, Soleil Blouin, and Alessandra Castelli were awarded the Golden Warrior Award for their service and leadership in ASTRA! They are wonderful examples of what Righetti ASTRA is all about!



### EXTRA NEWS!

Righetti ASTRA continues to give back to their school and the community! February and March have been busy for the club with the following activities:

Righetti Campus Clean-Up was held on Saturday, February 7<sup>th</sup> and March 7<sup>th</sup>. ASTRA members joined their fellow students and the PTSA Club by donating their time cleaning up the campus and making Righetti a better place for all!

Orcutt Youth Softball Association has asked for volunteers to help run their snack bar during the season that started Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup>. ASTRA volunteers are enjoying their time running the snack bar and learning job skills!

Righetti ASTRA has been asked to volunteer and entertain young children at a number of parent meetings most recently on March 12<sup>th</sup>. We love that the school is providing us with volunteer opportunities!

Thursday, March 26<sup>th</sup> will be a busy volunteer day for ASTRA members as they will be volunteering at the OASIS' Spring Fundraiser at the 1880 Union Hotel in Los Alamos and another group will be volunteering at the Alvin Elementary School's Science Night. Love these partnerships we have in the Orcutt and Santa Maria communities!

Righetti ASTRA is known for promoting literacy in the community with their book drives and service projects. We continue to receive donations of books each month from educators, community members, and ASTRA students in addition we have fulfilled local elementary school's requests for books for their students.

Righetti ASTRA held its monthly crafts event at the **Orcutt Library** on Saturday, March 21st. This month's theme was Easter crafts with a nice turnout including many new families! Thank you to ASTRA volunteers Jackie Gallardo, Bella Hernandez, Hugo Penuelas, Edgar Ruiz, and Abigail Santos who did an amazing job with the kids!



## March-ASTRA Club of AHC by Melinda

**3/11-Diversity Day**-Members of ASTRA at Allan Hancock College participated in the campus Diversity Day celebration by hosting an engaging cultural table representing Japan. Students decorated the table and shared popular **Japanese** treats, giving out free Mochi in a variety of flavors to event attendees. In addition to celebrating culture, ASTRA members used the opportunity to share information about the club's mission of service, leadership, and literacy. Students distributed flyers, spoke with visitors about community projects, and encouraged others to get involved. The event was a great way to celebrate diversity on campus while introducing new students to ASTRA and welcoming potential new members to the club. We had five ASTRA Students volunteer throughout the event, 11:30-1:30pm.



**3/19-Good Samaritan Afterschool Program**-. ASTRA AHC members recently brought festive cheer to the Good Samaritan Afterschool Program with a fun-filled St. Patrick's Day activity. Three dedicated ASTRA students volunteered their time to work with the children, helping them build creative leprechaun traps using a variety of craft materials. The celebration continued with delicious green-themed treats, including decorated green cupcakes and refreshing green juice. This event marks the beginning of an ongoing commitment, as ASTRA AHC students will now be volunteering at the program every third Thursday. Their continued involvement will provide meaningful support and positive engagement for the children in the program.



## JUVENILE HALL- Juvenile Hall Literacy Support

To support literacy and positive engagement, ASTRA AHC donated 60 books to the Juvenile Hall facility. Before the books can be distributed to youth, the Corrections staff must review and approve each title to ensure the content is appropriate for the facility. Once approved, the books will become part of the reading resources available to the youth. This project helps encourage reading, personal reflection, and educational growth while supporting the facility's guidelines for safe and appropriate materials. The Books were donated by Chapter Two bookstore in Lompoc. The books are geared towards ages 11-18.



## 3/27- ASTRA AHC Spreads Easter Joy to Seniors:

ASTRA members from Allan Hancock College are preparing to brighten the holiday season for local senior citizens by creating thoughtful Easter gift bags. During their meeting on March 27, students assembled 20 festive cellophane bags to be delivered to nursing home residents. Each bag was carefully filled with a small stuffed toy, a plastic egg filled with candy, colorful Easter grass. To add a special finishing touch, the bags will be tied with ribbon, making each one a cheerful and heartfelt gift. Stuffed animals and ribbon were donated by United Way. In addition to this project, ASTRA members are also participating in **Kindness Postcard Day**, where students create and send uplifting postcards filled with encouraging messages to community members. A postcard was attached to each basket with an Easter Greeting.





**3/13-** Members of the ASTRA Club of Pioneer Valley High School surprised Melinda with a special birthday celebration during their recent meeting. About 60 ASTRA students were in attendance as they presented cupcakes, sang “Happy Birthday,” and shared a joyful moment together. Students also gave Melinda a beautiful bouquet of flowers (courtesy of Tyler), a bag of chocolates and a birthday card that was signed by all the members present. In addition to the celebration, the club received one new membership application, reflecting continued interest in service and leadership within the ASTRA club.



**3/21-SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE:** The event brought approximately 150 volunteers, all working toward a common goal—building 65 beds for children in need. Three dedicated ASTRA students attended, accompanied by advisor Melinda, as guardian participation is required for youth volunteers. Parents made sure the students arrived promptly at 8:00 a.m. and immediately got to work. Their tasks included removing staples from wooden boards and helping transport large stacks of lumber to different workstations. Lunch was generously provided by local pizza restaurants. This hands-on experience not only allowed the students to give back to the community but also taught them the value of teamwork, responsibility, and service. The ASTRA Club is proud of these students for stepping up and making a difference—one bed at a time. The three volunteers were also awarded a SHP badge for their continued participation!



## ASTRA PV Students Spread Easter Joy at Afterschool Program

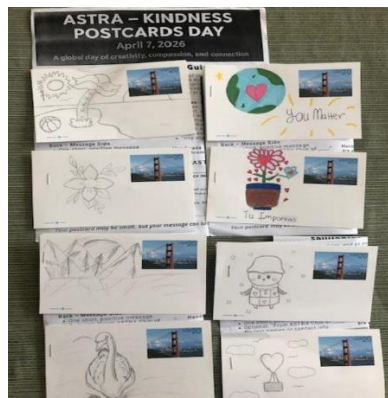
On March 31, ASTRA PV students volunteered at the Good Samaritan Afterschool Program to help celebrate Easter with local children. Four dedicated students spent the afternoon creating a fun and festive experience filled with hands-on activities and holiday cheer.

The volunteers hid prefilled plastic eggs for an exciting Easter egg hunt, which brought smiles and laughter to the children as they eagerly searched for treats. In addition to the hunt, the students guided the children in decorating and painting hard-boiled eggs, encouraging creativity and self-expression. The afternoon also included a special Easter craft, giving each child a keepsake to take home.



## ASTRA KINDNESS POSTCARD PROJECT:

ASTRA PV members are spreading kindness one postcard at a time through a new service project aimed at uplifting seniors in skilled nursing facilities. Throughout the month of April, students will be writing thoughtful messages to brighten residents' days and remind them they are valued and remembered. Postcards are distributed during ASTRA meetings by Melinda, and members take them home to personalize with encouraging notes, cheerful artwork, and heartfelt wishes. At the following meeting, students return the completed postcards, ready to be delivered to local seniors. In addition to supporting the local community, this project has expanded beyond state lines. Through the ASTRA International Committee, the club has been paired with a school in another state for a special postcard exchange. This connection allows students to share messages of kindness while building relationships and fostering a sense of unity with fellow ASTRA members across the country.



### 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