

NEWSLETTER

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



JULY 2026

Letter from our Governor, Hillary Sloan

Dear Altrusa Club Members,

It is with sincere gratitude and admiration that I extend my heartfelt thanks to each of you for the incredible service you provide to your communities. Every project you complete, every volunteer hour you give, and every life you touch reflects the very heart of Altrusa's mission. Your dedication to **service and literacy** continues to make a meaningful and lasting difference in the lives of countless individuals and families. Because of your commitment, children discover the joy of reading, adults gain opportunities to improve their literacy skills, families receive support during times of need, and communities grow stronger. Whether you are collecting books, supporting local schools and libraries, providing scholarships, organizing community service projects, or responding to emerging needs, your efforts demonstrate compassion in action. As we continue our journey together, I encourage every member to remain united in purpose and steadfast in dedication. Through unity, collaboration, and a shared commitment to service, there is no limit to what we can accomplish for those who depend on us. **Leadership** within our clubs is essential to fulfilling the Altrusa mission. Every leader—whether serving as an officer, committee chair, project coordinator, or mentor—helps transform ideas into action and ensures that our mission continues to thrive. Strong leaders cultivate new volunteers, encourage innovation, preserve our traditions, and inspire others to become engaged in meaningful service. Leadership strengthens our clubs, supports the success of our district, and expands the positive influence of Altrusa throughout our communities. Leadership is not defined by a title but by a willingness to serve, encourage others, and create opportunities for growth. When members step forward to lead, they help ensure the sustainability of our clubs, develop future leaders, and continue the legacy of service that has defined Altrusa for generations. Thank you for your generosity, your passion, and your unwavering commitment to making a difference. You embody the ideals of Altrusa every day, and I am honored to serve alongside such remarkable individuals. Together, we will continue to strengthen our clubs, enrich our communities, advance literacy, and inspire hope through service. Thank you for all you do to make Altrusa stronger and our communities better.

With sincere appreciation and gratitude,

Hillary Sloan

Governor

District Eleven

Altrusa International



CALENDAR OF EVENTS:
August 3-Board Meeting
August 10-Business Meeting
September 8-Board Meeting
September 14- Business Meeting

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

MEMBERSHIP SPOTLIGHT: This month, we are proud to spotlight **Ailina K. K. Mahelona**, better known to her friends and fellow Altrusans as **Noe**.

Born and raised in Hawaii, Noe married her husband, **Kurt**, in 1993 before the couple made Santa Maria their home. Here, they raised two children, **Kaulana (33)** and **Makana (26)**, while building strong roots in the community through volunteerism, youth sports, and school involvement. Throughout their children's school years, Noe and Kurt could often be found helping wherever they were needed, believing that giving back was an important part of raising a family.

Noe's passion for service led her to join **Altrusa in 2008**, drawn primarily by the organization's commitment to **literacy**. She would often share with her children while they were growing up: *"If you can read, you can do anything!"*

Since becoming an Altrusan, Noe has been a tireless volunteer and leader. She has served on either the **Altrusa Club Board**, the **Foundation Board**, and sometimes both, for much of her membership. Her willingness to step up and serve has helped strengthen the organization and support its many community programs. She is also no stranger to the **Festival of Trees**, having served as both Chair and Co-Chair multiple times. Her leadership, organizational skills, and enthusiasm have contributed to the success of one of Altrusa's (and the community's) most beloved annual fundraisers.

Outside of Altrusa, Noe continues to find creative ways to support local nonprofits. Along with several friends, she is helping transform their social group, the **805 Bunco Babes**, into a nonprofit organization. The group's mission is simple but impactful: collect a fee to play and donate the proceeds to local charitable causes. Last year, the Bunco Babes joined the Festival of Trees by sponsoring a tree, which many attendees may remember as the **pink, girly-themed tree displayed near the register**. Make sure to look for their tree this year! I have a feeling it will be pink again.

Professionally, Noe is a seasoned banker with more than three decades of experience. She began her career in 1994 as a part-time teller at Mid-State Bank. In 2001, just two weeks before **Community Bank of Santa Maria** opened its doors, she joined the team and has been part of the bank's growth ever since. Today, she serves as **Senior Vice President, Administrative & Compliance Manager**, overseeing three departments and helping ensure the bank's continued success and regulatory compliance.

In her free time Noe enjoys spending time with her family, loves the beach, playing pool and hopes to travel more...unless a grandchild comes along. 🍷😊



MEMBER BIRTHDAYS FOR September:

9/12-Jennifer Randolph

9/17-Sunday Ballas

Unfortunately, none of our members were born in August. But these famous actors were:

- *Jason Momoa (August 1)*
- *Mila Kunis (August 14)*
- *Robert De Niro (August 17)*
- *Charlize Theron (August 7)*
- *Viola Davis (August 11)*

LITERACY:

Little Free Libraries Continue to Thrive

Our three Little Free Libraries continue to thrive, sharing the joy of reading with our community. Thanks to generous book donations, the shelves remain stocked with books for readers of all ages. Together, we're helping make literacy accessible—one book at a time.

OASIS Centers Continue Their Generous Book Donations

The OASIS Centers continue to make a wonderful impact on our community through their generous donations of novels. To date, they have donated more than 300 books, helping bring the joy of reading to people of all ages. The books have been distributed to the Lompoc Unity Shoppe, teens at Santa Barbara County Juvenile Hall, and any remaining books are given to the Friends of the Santa Maria Public Library and the Friends of the Orcutt Library for their library book sales. We are grateful to the OASIS Centers for their continued support of literacy and for helping put great books into the hands of those who will enjoy them most.

20 Boxes of Children's Books Donated for Community Distribution

Our club recently received a generous donation of 20 boxes of children's books that will be distributed at upcoming community festivals and outreach events. These books will help us continue our mission of promoting literacy and putting books into the hands of children throughout our area. We are excited to partner with other nonprofit organizations like the Lompoc Unity Shoppe to ensure that these books reach families who will benefit from them most. By working together, we can expand our impact and encourage a lifelong love of reading in children across our community. We sincerely thank the donor for this wonderful contribution and for supporting our ongoing literacy efforts.

"Books inspire dreams, open minds, and create opportunities. Through literacy, we help build a brighter future—one reader at a time."

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!



Sleep in Heavenly Peace Builds 75 Beds for Children in Need

On July 25, Sleep in Heavenly Peace held a private bed build sponsored by Albertsons of Santa Maria, bringing together 95 Albertsons volunteers from across the Central Coast and Los Angeles. Working side by side, the volunteers built 75 beds that will soon provide children in need with a safe, comfortable place to sleep. Our own member, Melinda, continues to be an important part of the Sleep in Heavenly Peace organization, volunteering her time and helping make each bed build a success. After a productive day of service, volunteers enjoyed a delicious barbecue, celebrating the teamwork and community spirit that made the event possible. Every bed built represents hope, comfort, and the belief that no child should have to sleep on the floor. Thank you to Albertsons of Santa Maria and all the dedicated volunteers who made this meaningful project a success. *Next bed build is September 12 at SM Elks Lodge parking lot.*



Members: please submit your service articles to Melinda to be published in the newsletter by August 25. Let's share what you or someone else in our club has accomplished.

What Does Service Mean in an Altrusa Club?

Service is the heart of Altrusa. It means seeing a need in our community and taking action to make a positive difference. Whether it's promoting literacy, supporting local libraries, providing books to children and teens, building beds for children in need, mentoring young leaders through ASTRA, or partnering with other nonprofit organizations, every act of **service** matters. **Service** is more than volunteering time—it is sharing talents, building friendships, and working together to improve the lives of others. It means giving without expecting anything in return and knowing that even the smallest act of kindness can have a lasting impact. As Altrusans, we believe that by serving our communities, we inspire hope, strengthen connections, and create opportunities for others to thrive. Through **service**, we not only change lives—we enrich our own.

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 is 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 continues to update the yearbook every September

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:



2025-2026 Distinguished Clubs- our club received the Distinguished Club Award and will receive a Cord to pin on our banner. Thank you to all the members for their hours of volunteer service!

ALTRUSA INTERNATIONAL NEWS



CLUB FOUNDATION NEWS

FOUNDATION BOARD: Next meeting is September 21, 2026



Altrusa Foundation of the Central Coast Featured in Friends of the Orcutt Library Newsletter

The Altrusa Foundation of the Central Coast was recently recognized in the *Friends of the Orcutt Library* newsletter for its support of literacy and library programs. Being featured in another organization's publication is a wonderful opportunity to increase awareness of who we are and the impact our Foundation has in our community. Sharing our story helps introduce Altrusa to new audiences, highlights our commitment to literacy and service, and encourages others to partner with us in making a difference. Every opportunity to showcase our work strengthens our visibility and reminds the community that together, we are investing in brighter futures through education and literacy. A special thank you to the Friends of the Orcutt Library for highlighting our Foundation and helping spread the word about our mission and member Dayna and her ASTRA Club of RHS for working with the Orcutt Library once a month.



FESTIVAL OF TREES:

Festival of Trees is Just Around the Corner! By Noe Mahelona and Sunday Ballas, Co-chairs

The excitement is building as we begin preparations for this year's Festival of Trees, one of Altrusa's most anticipated community events and an important fundraiser supporting our service projects. We are fortunate to have Noe and Sunday serving as this year's Festival of Trees Co-Chairs, and they are already hard at work organizing another successful event.

On **July 24**, Noe sent an email to all members outlining the many tasks that need to be completed before, during, and after the Festival of Trees. If you have not had a chance to read it yet, please take a few minutes to review it carefully. The email contains valuable information about the event timeline, volunteer opportunities, and the many ways members can contribute to making this year's festival a success.

We are working with the mall on securing a site but are also looking at other locations. Currently we have 14 sponsors, which include Jinny & Michael Scott. Yay!

This event is more than just a fundraiser. It is an opportunity to showcase Altrusa's spirit of service, strengthen friendships among members, and create a memorable experience for our community. The more volunteers we have, the more organized, welcoming, and successful the festival will be.

Please look for Noe's July 24 email and consider signing up for one or more volunteer opportunities. Please reach out to her directly if you didn't receive it. Every task is important, and every volunteer helps. Let's work together to make this year's Festival of Trees our best festival yet!

Stay tuned for more information

Thank you in advance for your enthusiasm, generosity, and willingness to serve. We look forward to seeing everyone at the Festival of Trees! 🌲 ✨

ASTRA CLUBS- sponsored by Altrusa of the Central Coast

JULY-ASTRA Club of RHS by Dayna

Righetti ASTRA continued to volunteer during the month of July even though it was summer vacation time for our members.

July 11th found volunteers Miah Arevalo, Alfredo Damain, Bella Hernandez, Carolina Herrera, Yaritza Perez, Evelyn Romero, Edgar Ruiz, John Snyder, and Natalie Valenzuela helping with the 102nd Annual Pioneer Picnic at Pioneer Park. The volunteers helped with setting up, assisting members, and the raffle table. It was reported that the kids were awesome and worked their tails off and were very much appreciated!

July 18th found Alfredo Damian and Natalie Valenzuela volunteering their time giving a Righetti campus tour to Righetti alumni celebrating their 30th class reunion.

A fun time for all sharing past and present stories of Righetti High School with new Righetti principal, **Jeff Carroll** sharing that Righetti ASTRA Club is one of the prides of Righetti!



ASTRA AHC MEMBER SCHOLARSHIP WINNER



COLLEGE / UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP

Vincent Johnsen — \$1,000.00
District Eleven

Gloria Kaur — \$1,000.00
District Fifteen

**ASTRA Scholarship Winners: Leading with Purpose,
Learning with Heart.**

Proud to announce that our ASTRA Club of AHC member, **Vincent Johnsen**, was the Altrusa International Scholarship winner. The scholarship was started by April Smith, Altrusa SLO Co Club, while she was the Int'l ASTRA Chair. ASTRA PV and ASTRA AHC have applied every year and this is the first time a student in District Eleven has won! **Here is a bio on Vincent:**

"I'm a first-generation engineering student at Allan Hancock College, and I plan to transfer to Cal Poly SLO and pursue a degree in Electrical Engineering. I was ASTRA Secretary 2025-2026 as well as ASTRA secretary at ASTRA Club of Righetti High School. During that time, I really enjoyed being a part of this organization and I've also cherished the many opportunities to help my community. I am honored to receive this scholarship, and I'm very thankful to be one of the recipients of your generosity."

JULY-ASTRA Club of AHC by Melinda and Clint

ASTRA Allan Hancock College Gears Up for a New Year of Service

ASTRA at Allan Hancock College is excited to begin another year of service, leadership, and fellowship. The new school year kicks off with the Hancock Hello/Hola event on August 11, where club members will welcome new and returning students and share information about ASTRA and its many volunteer opportunities. The club's first meeting is scheduled for August 21, and members are eager to begin planning projects for the year. Students are especially interested in discovering new ways to volunteer both on campus and throughout the community, while continuing ASTRA's commitment to service and literacy. We look forward to welcoming new members and another successful year of making a positive difference together.



INTRODUCING Co-Advisor for ASTRA AHC Clint Freeland:

I began working at Hancock College in 2001. This year marks 25 years @ AHC in the counseling department. I have taught personal development and career readiness classes in the past and provided extensive outreach for AHC in the surrounding counties. I have a Bachelor of Arts degree from Fresno state and a Master of Science degree from CSU Northridge in Educational Psychology. I enjoy my job and feel it is a privilege to serve the local community.

I'm happily married with two children and live in Orcutt. My free time is spent w family, writing and being outdoors.

JULY-ASTRA CLUB OF PVHS by Melinda and Tyler

ASTRA Pioneer Valley High School Shares Literacy Fun at Santa Maria Mall with “Bluey”

On July 9, six ASTRA Pioneer Valley High School members volunteered at the Santa Maria Mall Kids Event, where they shared the joy of reading and creativity with local families. The students gave away 80 children's books, helped youngsters create fun crafts, and spent time building with LEGO® bricks. Although attendance was smaller than usual—likely due to summer vacations—the volunteers enjoyed connecting with the children who attended and making the event a positive experience. Every outreach event, regardless of size, helps promote literacy and encourages a love of reading. Thank you to our dedicated ASTRA students for giving their time during summer break to serve our community.

CLUB BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2026-2027

Nancy Voss	President
Maria Castillo	Vice President
Stephanie Stadtmiller	Secretary
Sunday Ballas	Treasurer
Leticia Kossuth	Director
Noe Mahelona	Director-(26-28)
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