

NEWSLETTER

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



AUGUST 2026

Hello Central Coast Altrusans,

August has come and is almost gone. School has started, vacations are ending and the days are getting shorter but our Altrusa of the Central Coast is just gaining momentum!! On August 15th we participated in Kids Day in the Park with book tables and games/prizes for all ages. Leticia had a beach theme and everyone had a glorious time. Thank you, Jennifer, Emily, Gail and Dee for coming out to help. I even handed out two business cards to prospective member, along with an FOT application and a Girl Scouts troop leader that wants to work with our club to collect books!! Noe and Betty enjoyed the evening of August 25th giving out books at Friday Night Lights activity. Leticia and Jennifer will be there September 18th. Downtown Friday Night runs Friday nights through September from 5-8pm along McClelland behind the Santa Maria Library. Everyone is welcome to attend. Mark your calendars on October 10th for our "Make A Difference Bunco Party" at the Boys and Girls Club from 1-4pm. Our club is suggesting Sleep in Heavenly Peace as our choice to receive the funds raised. We will vote at our September meeting on our final choice from suggestions from all three Altrusa clubs. November will bring the Festival of Trees and then it's time for Santa Claus. This is just what our club has been and will be doing. We haven't added in our ASTRA clubs and their activities!!

Monday, September 7th, is our Board Meeting at Magic Dragon Asian Restaurant at 5:30pm. Our Business Meeting will be on September 14th at 6pm at Pappy's Restaurant on Betteravia. Bring your appetite!! Hope to see you all at our next meeting.

Your President,
Nancy Voss



CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

September 8-Board Meeting
September 14- Business Meeting
October 5-Board Meeting
October 12-Business Meeting

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Maria G. Castillo, Club Vice President

Early Life and Family

I was born and raised in Corona, California. In 1999, my family and I moved to the Central Coast when I was assigned to the California Men's Colony as a Correctional Officer. In 2003, I relocated from Arroyo Grande to Santa Maria. I have two children, Frankie and Marcella, who attended Pioneer Valley High School. In 2012, I remarried the love of my life, Ronnie Castillo.

Festival of Trees and Altrusa

One day, Ronnie took me to the Festival of Trees. I had never heard of the event before, but once I experienced it, I was thrilled. Attending soon became an annual tradition for us, and one year we even won a tree sponsored by Adamo Cellars that included lots and lots of wine. The event was something I knew I wanted to be part of. In 2017, I organized the California Men's Colony's first sponsorship of a Christmas tree, titled "First Responders Christmas." As I got to know the members of Altrusa, I knew I wanted to join after I retired. CMC continues to participate in the Festival of Trees, even after my retirement in 2023.

Service Recognition

Before retiring in 2023, I received a Distinguished Service Award from the California State Senate in recognition of my service as a Correctional Officer.

Retirement, Service, and Family

Retirement has been busy and fulfilling. My schedule is filled with volunteer work and service commitments, including:

- Serving as the current Vice Chair of the Altrusa Board
- Volunteering at Pacific Christian Center
- Being on call for a Hope Line hotline that supports family members and friends of loved ones struggling with addiction
- Participating on several committees in various service roles

When I am not volunteering, I enjoy traveling with my husband. We love going to the beach, getting out for sightseeing trips, and spending time together. I am also blessed to have four grandchildren—three in California and one in Miami.



Our club will be taking a group photo courtesy of our member Tyler Dickinson at the business meeting on 11/9/26 at the Festival of Trees site, 6pm.



SUNSHINE Welcome to Our New Sunshine Chair, Betty Wolf

We are grateful to have Betty Wolf step forward to join our Communication's Committee as our new **Sunshine Chair**! She will help spread a little sunshine throughout our club by sending greeting cards for **birthdays, sympathy, congratulations, thank-you, and other special occasions**. Thank you for volunteering to take on this important role. We truly appreciate your willingness to step in and help keep our members connected and cared for!

October 12 Business/Program Meeting: WISDOM CENTER

Mark your calendars for our October 12 Business/Program Meeting! We are excited to welcome the Wisdom Center as our guest speaker. This will be a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the organization, the services it provides, and how it supports our local community. We hope our members will join us for an informative and inspiring program. Come learn, connect, and discover how we can continue making a difference in our community!

BUNCO Time!

♥ *Make a Difference Day* ♥

Altrusa Club of the Central Coast will celebrate Make a Difference Day on **October 10** by holding a Bunco at Boys and Girls Club of Mid Central Coast, 901 N. Railroad.

ALTRUSA International Club of the Central Coast

All three local Altrusa Clubs will gather to play and the proceeds will benefit a local non-profit.

OCTOBER 10
1 - 4 PM

TICKETS
\$40

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF MID CENTRAL COAST
901 N. Railroad
Santa Maria, CA

SILENT AUCTION ★ **DELICIOUS FOOD** ★ **GREAT PRIZES** ★ **MUSIC & FUN**

Let's roll for a great cause! ♥

Come play Bunco, have fun, and make a difference in our community!

MEMBER BIRTHDAYS FOR September/October:

9/12-Jennifer Randolph
9/17-Sunday Ballas
10/11-Stephanie Stadtmiller
10/15-Emily Lopes
10/19-Mary Morton
10/27-Stacey Bassett

LITERACY:

A Fourth Little Free Library! Our Little Free Library program continues to grow! We are excited to announce that a **fourth Little Free Library is now located at Orcutt Community Park**, making it even easier for children and families in our community to enjoy free books. A special thank-you goes to Club Vice President **Maria**, who has volunteered to help keep our Little Free Libraries fully stocked with children's books. Her dedication will help ensure that young readers always have something new and exciting to discover.



A Day in the Park on August 15, 2026:

Altrusa of the Central Coast had another wonderful time at *Day in the Park* on August 15 at Waller Park! From 12–4 p.m., we gave away **more than 200 books** to children and families who visited our lively, colorful booth and over 200 school supplies. Our new members got to experience this event for the first time. A special thank you to all of our Altrusa members who volunteered their time to sit at the booth and welcome visitors. It was wonderful to see so many children stop by and choose a book to take home. Our club has proudly participated in A Day in the Park for 21 years. The event originally began when it was organized by the Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Centers and has changed hands and names several times over the years. Despite those changes, it has remained a much-loved community tradition that families look forward to every year. A big thank-you to Ed Carcarey for always looking out for our club and helping keep us connected to this wonderful community event!



Downtown Friday Nights-Altrusa of the Central Coast will be participating in Downtown Friday Nights on August 28 and September 18. We are excited to have a wonderful booth where we can share our love of literacy by giving **free books** to children who attend the event. A special thank-you goes to our Altrusa members, Noe, Sunday, Leticia, Gail and Jennifer, for helping set this opportunity up for our club and for volunteering at one of the evenings. This is a great way to get our club noticed in the community, connect with local families, and spread the joy of reading. We appreciate everyone who helps make these community events possible!

Unity Shop- Books Find Their Way to Local Children

On August 19, Melinda delivered **60 adult and children's books** to the Lompoc Unity Shoppe food distribution. During the summer, children had been enjoying the books available there, and the bookcase was in need of replenishing. The books were part of a generous donation given to our club last month. We are grateful for the donation, which continues to help put books into the hands of local children and encourage a love of reading in our community.

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!

Altrusa Supports Cram the Van

Our club donated \$75 to United Way to support the Cram the Van school supply collection. This community effort helps provide much-needed school supplies to local students as they prepare for the new school year.

Altrusa Supports Good Samaritan Shelter Back-to-School Shopping

Altrusa of the Central Coast donated \$150 to Good Samaritan Shelter to help support its Back-to-School Shopping Spree held on August 8 at Old Navy.

Several of our Altrusa members also had the opportunity to volunteer and shop alongside a child, helping them select the school supplies and clothing they needed for the upcoming school year.



NEXT BED BUILD 9/12 AT SM ELKS LODGE, 8AM

A special thank you to our wonderful members, **Stacey, Bea and Melinda**, for donating pillows and bedding to Sleep in Heavenly Peace. These thoughtful donations will help provide comfort and warmth to children receiving new beds through this important organization. Your generosity is a wonderful example of how small acts of kindness can make a big difference in the lives of children in our community. We appreciate your commitment to service.



A big thank you to our members who collected and donated empty prescription bottles for Matthew 25 Ministries! Your simple act of saving and bringing in these bottles helps support an organization that provides much-needed medical supplies to people around the world. Every bottle donated makes a difference. We appreciate our members for remembering to save their bottles and for helping turn an everyday item into something that can benefit others.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY by Maria Castillo (805.440.3632):

Altrusa will have a table set up at the event. We plan on giving out books, water, and snacks to support the participants. Everyone is welcome to join us, and I am currently seeking additional **volunteers** to help with these activities. If you are interested in volunteering, please let me know—your support truly makes a difference. Together, we can make a meaningful impact for Project Rescue, which provides vital services and hope to these survivors. If you wish to participate in the run or walk, registration is easy—simply use the scan code on the attached flyer. A hundred percent of the funds raised will benefit Project Rescue. For more details, please visit www.projectrescue.com.

5K 
RUN & WALK
Run for Freedom!

Every step brings hope. Every mile changes lives.

Join us for a 5K Run & Walk to support survivors of human trafficking and exploitation. Together, we can create a world of freedom and restoration.

SPONSORED BY
PACIFIC CHRISTIAN CENTER

 **SUPPORT SURVIVORS** |  **PROMOTE FREEDOM** |  **BRING HOPE** |  **MAKE AN IMPACT**

REGISTER TODAY!

 **SATURDAY**
OCTOBER 3RD
2026

 **8:00 AM**

 **WALLER PARK**

 **\$40**

100% OF THE FUNDS RAISED BENEFIT


PROJECT RESCUE
Rescuing lives. Redefining hope. Restoring freedom.


SCAN TO REGISTER

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 **Betty** for chairing this committee. Betty can be reached at 805-714-5319 or by email at wolfbetty@ymail.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

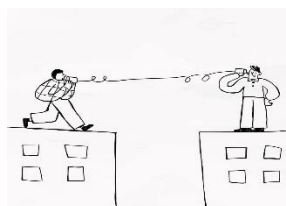
Yearbook-The communications committee continues to update the yearbook every September

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:

ALTRUSA INTERNATIONAL NEWS

International Fall Book Challenge- Keep your eyes out for information on our upcoming International Fall Books Challenge! This exciting event will take place from **September 1 through November 30**, challenging Altrusa clubs to **donate books** in their community to support literacy around the world. Data on donations will be collected for each participating club; those who meet the challenge criteria will receive a **special patch for their club banner**. President Chris DeVlieger is currently working on a logo and patch, and will roll out the challenge in phases. During the challenge, be sure to **designate someone from your club to upload the number of books donated onto the website**. Awards will be presented once the challenge window has closed. Start thinking now of where your club can have the biggest impact in getting books into the hands of people in your community! (*Altrusa Service Newsletter*)



CLUB FOUNDATION NEWS

FOUNDATION BOARD: Next meeting is September 21, 2026



Our Foundation President, Leticia Kossuth, pinned the Altrusa Int'l Lamplighter Pin on our Club President Nancy Voss at our 8/10 Business Meeting. Our Club Foundation donated \$500 to Altrusa Int'l Foundation during our conference in May. Congratulations Nancy!

FESTIVAL OF TREES by Noe and Sunday:

Festival of Trees Update: Volunteers Needed!

Planning for this year's Festival of Trees (FOT) is well underway! At the July Business Meeting, Noe shared a spreadsheet outlining the many duties and tasks that need to be completed before the event. Several members generously signed up to help gather information and explore opportunities.

If you volunteered for a task, please remember to share your findings with **Noe and Sunday** as soon as possible so planning can continue moving forward.

Have not signed up yet? There is still time! The spreadsheet was emailed to members again on **August 11, 2026**. Take a look and see if there is an area that interests you. Whether you can contribute a little time or a lot, your help will make a difference.

By the time this newsletter reaches you, we will have **less than three months** before Festival of Trees activities begin. The sooner we fill these volunteer roles, the more prepared and successful our event will be.

See something you'd like to help with? **Contact Noe and Sunday today and sign up!** Together, we can make this year's Festival of Trees our best one yet.

NOW

WE MAKE HISTORY.

Now is the moment we've been waiting for. With new treatments emerging in the fight against Alzheimer's and all other dementia, now is the time for hope. Now is the time for action.

Help us keep the momentum going in your community at the Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's®, the world's largest fundraiser to fight the disease. Register today at alz.org/walk.

Walk to End Alzheimer's – Santa Maria
Saturday, Oct. 24, 2026

Waller Park
3107 Orcutt Road, Santa Maria
Registration at 8:30 a.m.
Ceremony at 9:30 a.m.
Walk at 9:45 a.m.

REGISTER OR DONATE

Scan to register or visit alz.org/santamariawalk

Questions? Contact Tamra Mariott at tamariott@alz.org or 805.617.0239

2026 NATIONAL PRESENTING SPONSOR
Edward Jones

WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S
ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

Rev. Jan26 229-10-0121

Our foundation is a proud supporter of the Alzheimers Walk. Please make your donation online or to Bea at one of our meetings. Any amount is welcomed! Walk On.....



ASTRA CLUBS- sponsored by Altrusa of the Central Coast

AUGUST-ASTRA Club of RHS by Dayna

ASTRA Righetti High School Keeps Adults Reading

ASTRA Righetti High School students donated more than 75 Grown-up novels/ books to the Lompoc Unity Shoppe arriving at just the right time—bookcase was in need of replenishing! A heartfelt thank you to ASTRA Righetti High School and Altrusa member Dayna (ASTRA club advisor) for continuing to support literacy in our community.



Righetti ASTRA members continued to volunteer during their summer vacation in August:

August 3rd - 7th - Righetti High School Freshman Orientation & iPad Distribution. Lots of ASTRA members volunteered many hours during the week before school started. ASTRA members assisted with checking in, giving campus tours, handing out and setting up iPads, and answering questions for over 700 incoming freshman that attended the Freshman Orientation on August 5th. In addition, they also helped all week distribute and help set-up iPads for all 2500 Righetti students who traded in their old tablet for a new iPad. Righetti could not have done it without the ASTRA and other student volunteers!

August 8th - OASIS Annual Summer Concert and Comedy Night Benefit at Presqu'ile Winery. ASTRA members Miah Arevalo Tovar, Jannah Guillen, Bella Hernandez, Carolina Herrera, Destiny Rojas Villa, Evelyn Romero, and Edgar Ruiz volunteered their time helping with the busy event from 4:00 - 10:00 pm. Thank you to OASIS for another wonderful volunteer opportunity.

The poster features a light blue and white plaid background. It is decorated with several pumpkins in orange, white, and purple, along with various autumn leaves and flowers. A central white oval frame contains the event details. The text "RIGHETTI ASTRA PRESENTS" is arched over the top of the oval, with a small purple heart and leaf icon below it. The main title "Fall Crafts" is prominently displayed in the center, with "Fall" in orange and "Crafts" in purple script. Below the title, the text "FOR CHILDREN OF ALL AGES" is written in a simple, dark font. The date and time "SAT. SEPTEMBER 19TH | 11:00AM - 1:00 PM" are centered below that, with a small purple heart icon above the date. At the bottom, a purple rounded rectangle contains the address "175 S BROADWAY, ORCUTT ORCUTT LIBRARY".

RIGHETTI ASTRA PRESENTS

Fall Crafts

FOR CHILDREN OF ALL
AGES

SAT. SEPTEMBER 19TH | 11:00AM - 1:00
PM

175 S BROADWAY, ORCUTT
ORCUTT LIBRARY

AUGUST-ASTRA Club of AHC by Melinda

8/11-ASTRA AHC Welcomes Students at Hancock Hello/Hola

ASTRA Club of Allan Hancock College participated in the Hancock Hello/Hola event on August 11. Members welcomed students, shared information about ASTRA, and signed up new members who are interested in getting involved in service and leadership opportunities. Students received treats, journals, pencils, and ASTRA AHC flyers. ASTRA members Vincent and Nathan also volunteered their time to help Melinda at the event. *(Vincent/Nathan)*



8/21/26-Victory Snacks Continue at Juvenile Hall

ASTRA AHC is continuing its SB Juvenile Boys Snacks project for the 2026–2027 ASTRA year with a new theme: “Victory Snacks!” The idea is simple—when the boys accomplish a goal, they receive a snack to celebrate their success. Whether they complete a job, finish their journal, meet a reading goal, or accomplish another positive milestone, these small treats provide encouragement and recognition for their efforts. ASTRA members prepare the snacks for donation every two months during the second ASTRA meeting of the month.

8/21/26-ASTRA AHC Starts the New Year with Great Energy-ASTRA AHC kicked off the new year with a fantastic turnout and lots of enthusiasm! The club welcomed a new vice president, Angela, and is excited to continue meeting in the same room A103 on campus. ASTRA AHC also plans to piggyback with other clubs on campus, creating opportunities to work together. One highlight of the meeting was welcoming a new member, Yahir, who had never been part of a club before. He was excited to get involved and become part of ASTRA AHC. *(Clint/Melinda)*



ASTRA AHC Inspires a Young Man at Juvenile Hall

The impact of ASTRA Allan Hancock College reaches far beyond campus! The club recently learned that a young man at Santa Barbara County Juvenile Hall was inspired by the work ASTRA AHC has been doing in the community. After seeing the positive difference ASTRA members were making he became motivated to pursue his own education. He is now attending classes through Allan Hancock College Lompoc Campus! What a wonderful reminder that one act of service can inspire another person to believe in their future.

August-ASTRA CLUB OF PVHS by Melinda and Tyler

8/8-ASTRA Pioneer Valley High School Gives Back at Monthly Mall Event-ASTRA Pioneer Valley High School continues to make a difference by participating in the monthly mall events. ASTRA members gave away 85 books to children and families. The students also kept the little ones busy with fun activities, including making animal masks, beaded bracelets, and assorted crafts.



8/21/26- ASTRA PVHS Starts the New Year with Great Enthusiasm-ASTRA PVHS kicked off the new school year with an amazing 55 students attending the first meeting! Students enjoyed pizza and participated in a raffle for three gift cards. Tyler took the opportunity to review the club rules and expectations, especially the importance of following through when students volunteer for a project. Showing up and keeping commitments are important parts of being an ASTRA member and making a difference in our community. Tyler also shared information about the scholarships Altrusa of the Central Coast awards to graduating seniors, giving students another reason to stay active and involved throughout their high school years. *(Melinda/Tyler)*



From ASTRA PVHS Member to Teacher and Club Leader

It was a special surprise when a former ASTRA Pioneer Valley High School member, Wafiq Farfan, stopped by class to greet Melinda. Wafiq was an ASTRA member from 2018–2021 and has gone on to attend Cal Poly, with plans to become an English teacher. She is now completing an internship at Pioneer Valley High School. Wafiq shared an inspiring story about how her ASTRA experience continues to impact her. While attending Cal Poly, she was asked if she could help revive a struggling club on campus. Because of the leadership, organizational, and service skills she developed through ASTRA PVHS, she knew exactly what to do—and successfully helped revive the club! Her experience is a wonderful reminder that the skills students learn through ASTRA can stay with them long after high school and make a difference in college, careers, and their communities. Wafiq plans to stop by the next ASTRA PVHS meeting to share her story and encourage current members. We are excited to welcome her back and hear how ASTRA helped prepare her for success! *(Here is Melinda, ASTRA Advisor and Wafiq during the 8/21 ASTRA PVHS meeting)*



ASTRA is an international community service organization for youth and young adults sponsored and supported by local Altrusa Clubs.

ASTRA is an acronym for:

Ability to know that all of us have special talents to share with others

Service to improve the lives of those less fortunate in the community

Training to develop leadership ability and potential

Responsibility to learn to accept obligations and know the satisfaction of carrying projects through to a successful conclusion

Achievement to experience success; to know that a group can accomplish so much more than any one individual

The ASTRA motto is “Growing in Service”

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