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Governor's Message

A New Year and Happy Hearts!



Rhonda Hauter

As we start our New Year I want to send a message of heartfelt thanks. To each and everyone of you for the way in which you have pitched in to keep supporting your communities despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, thank you! From wrapping presents outside in 20 degrees weather, to making phone calls to those who are pretty much home-bound during this time, to taking events virtual almost overnight. You have found ways to push through and get 'er done! This is the real true spirit of what being an Altrusan is all about. It would have been very easy to say 'we will reconvene when the pandemic is passed.' The fact remains that the needs you serve do not take a holiday. This is when you are needed even more. Even our own members who were most impacted by the pandemic found ways to continue

to help from home. I applaud you all!

The beginning of the year is a busy time for clubs. It's time to get your nominating committees in place, submit entries for District Awards, submit applications to the International Foundation for Grants and much more. As I have often said 'if a project is worth doing then it is certainly worth an entry for an award or an application for a grant or both.' And, in these challenging times grants can be a very helpful way to fund projects that are important to your communities. And, while I am on the subject of grants, look outside of Altrusa. There are

organizations that will make grants available but you have to look for them and all you have to do is ask. I challenge you to make this a focus in your club. Let's Grow! our impact by being resourceful and flexible in how we approach what we do. I look forward to learning of your successes.

Have a great year!

Rhonda Hauter, District Twelve Governor

ASTRA Still Finding Ways to Serve

Debbie McBee, District Twelve ASTRA Chair

These are challenging times for both Altrusans and ASTRA members. Together, we are making every effort to still make significant things happen by our youth in our communities.

The **ASTRA Club of Roseburg** has been able to meet in person a few times and held their Stocking Stuffer project for Safe Haven before the holidays. They are also planning on assisting **Altrusa Club of Roseburg** with the Celebration of Literacy annual activities this spring.

The **ASTRA Club of Pendleton** was able to meet outdoors in the park during the fall months and held its Initiation and Installation ceremony in November (socially distanced and with masks) with a VFW speaker, Commander Judith Burger. They also collected and delivered supplies for the local warming center, cut out denim shoe templates to make about 30 pairs of children's shoes for children in Uganda, and shopped, wrapped (outside in 20 degree weather) and delivered gifts for two large families before Christmas. They will be holding their ASTRA meetings on zoom during the winter and are hoping to collect supplies for Pioneer Relief Nursery in the coming month.

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What good is getting new members if you can't keep them?



Cynthia Mounts

Cynthia Mounts, 2nd Vice Governor

I've always been asked how we retain members in our club. My easy answer would be, "let them catch the Altrusa fever." But its more complicated than that.

Know that Retention is closely tied to Recruitment. They are like twin sisters.

First of all, let's think of reasons why we should retain our members. Could it be that they become long term ambassadors of our club and mission, could it be that they help in increasing productivity, could it be creating loyalty, could it be having the endurance despite challenges, or could it be it provides stability. The answer is all of the above.

There are two very important segments of Retention that we want to focus on because these are so valuable in retaining a member. One is having a marketing strategy when recruiting to begin with. Why? Because we want to attract those who see the value of joining and aligning with our club, get active, and staying for a long time. We should be able to tell who we are, why we are, how we help, who we help and what we do. The more quality is the recruitment, the better is the retention rate. The second is focusing on benefits. Emphasize your membership benefits to both current and prospective members. Start off by writing a list of benefits that your members enjoy. List everything from mentorship to special discounts to exclusive access to your large library of resources and the friendly relationship. For prospective members, you'll use to convey benefits through your marketing materials. For instance, you may push them to go to your website that would show the benefits of membership in action in real life situation.

It is important to note that once you have initiated a member, I always say to create a VIP (Very Important Person) in that new member. Accommodate her ideas careful not to reject, give her a chance to perform, send her to training, workshops, conferences, conventions and most of all mentor her in addition to a sponsor. In short, holding her hand to the path of catching the Altrusa fever.

There are many barriers preventing a current or prospective member from joining or actively participating in Altrusa. This is where the word INNOVATE comes in. Where do you gather presents first impression, its frequency, less formal and shorter rituals, and less meetings? Young professionals or not, nobody wants to sit around for a two-hour meeting. Listen well, be observant, learn, and take action.

For current members, you can greatly remind them of your membership benefits by sending congratulatory emails whenever the member reaches a specific milestone. Celebrate the progress your member has made and tie this progress back to membership in your club. Better still, conduct a testimonial portion of the meeting perhaps during Altrusa birthday party where there are guests to celebrate the growth and successes of members. These testimonies are effective.

Open communication at all times. Best way to keep members engaged is to keep them informed. When one member is not as actively participating in remote meetings, or any event or club activity, do not let the opportunity to connect pass by. A quick phone call, email, text to ask the "why" will somehow open the gates of a warm connection. As humans when someone takes time to call and ask how you are makes you feel important or valued.

Lastly, are you paying attention to the available skills within your club? Are you using these skills to the fullest? Are you repurposing skills so you can maximize value in time, donations and manpower? For example, if a member cannot carry a box of books to your book give away event due to health reasons, you may assign her to clean and stick labels on the books. This way, job is done and you made your member feel she's useful and done something for the community. A powerful affirmation.

ASTRA Continued from Page 1



The **ASTRA Club of Albany** are hopeful that when things settle down post-pandemic that they can become a vibrant active chartered ASTRA club. Their members will be putting together care packages to support the Jackson Street Youth shelter this month.

The **Altrusa Club of Olympia** members are still interested in starting an ASTRA club but are waiting until community meetings can be held again to push that effort forward.

This more "quiet" time is a great time for Altrusa clubs to plan and lay the groundwork for sponsoring an ASTRA club next school year, with the pandemic hopefully winding down by then. We have an excellent 2 minute informative video about ASTRA that can be shared with your fellow Altrusans or with school and community members (available on <https://astra.altrusa.org> after member login, or from Debbie). For anyone who has questions or would like more info about ASTRA, please contact Debbie McBee at mmcbeed@aol.com or 541-969-8748.



RESILIENT CLUBS 2020... Continued

Cynthia Mounts, 2nd Vice Governor

Last year, my District visitations were face to face. I enjoyed traveling and meeting new faces and making new friends. This year is different. Visitations were made virtually and it was quite a challenge since we all are not used to doing it online. Ultimately, it was as exciting and most of all, I didn't have to leave home. The wonders of digital world!

Below I am featuring the STARS of my visitation this year. They are Hermiston, Mid-Columbia, Pendleton, and Spokane clubs.



HERMISTON

This club has three Little Free Libraries in their community. They celebrated Make a Difference Day on October 24th at all three sites with a book and ice cream give away. They used children's and young adult books from their existing inventory, and also received a generous donation of gently used books from the Friends of the Hermiston Library. Twelve members participated, and supplied tables for the books and coolers for the ice cream. The children choosing books were asked to wear a mask. At one site, families could simply park at the curb, and club members delivered to the vehicle. The event was published in the newspaper, the radio station and on Facebook.

Hermiston club has 38 active members with two emeritus and one new member since 5/31/2020. Yay! Hermiston club also has the Girls Night-In and Soup for Homeless projects that keep them busy. They feel like one family, giving love, friendship and service to their community that bonds them together.

MID-COLUMBIA

Mid-Columbia club has helped gather supplies to give to people who badly need them during this time of uncertainty of COVID. They have worked hard to help flatten the curve of the virus - another service to their community.



Despite the difficulties brought about by COVID restrictions, they have managed to add new members to their club. CONGRATULATIONS for initiating two NEW members, **Nina Harrison** and **Jessica Pofahl**. Way to go, Mid-Columbia - keep up the good work!

Chartered in 2017, Mid-Columbia is learning how to grow their club. They strive to maximize their connection with the community by partnering with local businesses to serve the community in stopping child poverty. According to Jennifer Richart, club President, the club held an online book drive and raised \$1800 for the Children's Developmental Center and donated over 300 new board books. They partnered with an online book consultant from Usborne Books and promoted their online event through social media. The Children's Developmental Center was in need of board books for ages 0-3. The books are paramount in a child's development from a literacy standpoint and also are an integral component of therapy. The therapists and teachers use the books as tools when they are working with children on their articulation and enunciation of words. They are used in fine motor skill development by asking the child to point to specific colors or illustrations.

Books are something many of us take for granted because we have liberal access. For many of the families the Children's Developmental Center serves, they simply do not have the means to afford books. With COVID-19 and the closure of the libraries, the books are needed more than ever in homes.

PENDLETON

See the videos from "The 12 Days of (Pendleton) Altrusa" Raffle on our Facebook Page:

www.facebook.com/altrusaofpendleton

Karin Power, club President reports, "Our Christmas bazaar was canceled, but we decided to hold the raffle anyway. It is always a part of the bazaar and we thought it might help us recoup some of our losses.

We called it a fundraiser, but it was equally about raising awareness of all of our programs and supporting our community. For twelve days in

November, Pendleton Altrusa went LIVE on Facebook and drew a raffle ticket and spotlighted one of our projects. We had 15 raffle baskets and one \$2,500 cash grand prize.



We sold 2000 tickets, at \$5.00 a ticket. All the baskets and cash were donated, so we netted \$10,000. It's our best year yet! Each basket had a theme and we tried to match the project with the basket. What fun! The most amazing part is that we could spotlight more than 12 aspects of Pendleton Altrusa. They were:

DAY 1: Feed the Child - 9,743 food bags to children experiencing food insecurity in 2019-2020

DAY 2: Service: 14 grants awarding \$5450 to various projects within the community, serving a variety of groups and projects within the community

DAY 3: Days for Girls has distributed 500 hygiene kits (more than 50 volunteers). These mostly went to refugee projects. Our International has provided micro-loans to post-polio women in Mali, Africa. We have also sent money for a day care project in Mali.

DAY 4: PAWS- contributed pet food and supplies to the local animal shelter

DAY 5: Scholarship: 11- \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors HOPE: provides mentoring and financial assistance to one Blue Mountain Community College Student. Our current student is a Native American male.

DAY 6: ASTRA- high school service club sponsored by our club; currently 50+ members, open to all students

DAY 7: KARE: serves an average of 90 children per year providing essential needs (clothing, bedding, hygiene), primarily focused on local homeless youth, but also provided supplies after the February floods to any families in need.

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Altrusa Service Rolls On

Julie Livingston, District Service Chair

In the words of our International President Beverly Hardy: "We are living in an unprecedented time. Let us join hands in a virtual circle and remember Altrusans are leading to a better community. Even if we are self-quarantined, we can be leaders in service and give support to others in our community through example by reaching out to friends and family in our communities virtually. We can let them know that we care about their safety and wrap our arms around them virtually. Making calls and sending emails are paramount to those that are need- ing love, support and reassurance." And it's AWESOME that throughout our District Twelve, Altrusans and ASTRA members have stepped up through their Service Projects and served others in the practical and meaningful ways that their communities have needed and as those need have changed, evolved during 2020.

And we do it with phone calls to our families, one another and our communities and with cards and emails too. Then came the virtual meetings and video apps- we are all staying connected and to our community partners and we develop deeper relationships in the ways that also lead to finding and meeting more of the community needs. Needs which include Backpack Buddies programs that evolved from back to school to drive through community events, to delivering books sets in drive by park events and teacher support programs., community centers, care centers, tribal centers, and other services.

And all done with masks - yes, masks made by many Altrusans and friends for children, youth, and adults. And while still sewing Days For Girls kits too. All Clubs this year have been touched by the needs for food security, safety, health concerns, homelessness, and other concerns. So what do Altrusans do...we rise to the challenges, we figure out how to care for and support those in need often through partnerships with other community service groups. So Backpacks are filled with LOVE and SUPPORT of Books, Food, Hygiene Supplies, clothing, sleeping bags, blankets, activity items. Food Banks find Altrusa hands collecting and donating much needed food items, packing those boxes, delivering them safely to people in need. Schools once served lunches in cafeterias - now its "Lunch on the Bus." Neighbors who used to live on the street now have a safe place to call home at the Hope Center or the Caring Place, or First Place Family. And when wildfires struck our region Altrusans volunteered where they could to help refugees and they continue to help as many of these folks remain displaced in our cities and towns, with kindness and support we all feel the HUG that one needs. Sure we have moved our Clubs online, and our fundraisers for the Service projects also moved online, Altrusa and Astra members learned to make videos and presentations online all while making phone calls, sending cards and emails to stay in communication safely with others. And the Service to others continues!

#ALTRUSAROCKS #ASTRAROCKS

2020 has certainly had its challenges which also bring about opportunities to stretch and grow. Our Clubs have certainly gone to their comfort zones and beyond as we have expanded our capacity to help others in need. You morphed how you provide service during this time and continue to meet the expanding needs within the communities you serve. THANK YOU all for making it through 2020 and for paving the way for an exciting 2021!

2021 is another year of promise, thankfulness, gratitude and a clear vision for what it means to help others. You will notice there are other people in our communities who are watching us, perhaps they have already joined in with a service project or fundraiser... bring them along with your club, your tribe in 2021! We all know there is still much to do to serve others and as the saying goes, "It takes a Village" - Well, Altrusa is an awesome village!

NEW MEMBER ALERT!!!

This is the time to recruit new members. From December 1st – March 31st your new member can join Altrusa for just 50% of the regular price for International and District dues. That applies also to the Young Professionals as well who already can join for 50% and now will get 50% off that price. Think of this as your best ever after Christmas sale!!

If you have friends or acquaintances who are unable to attend your normal meetings, and you are now doing ZOOM meetings, maybe this is a good way to get them to see what kind of organization we have.

Let's see how many new members we can get before March 31st!! Let me know if you have any questions.

Anne DeFrancisco, District Treasurer –
adefran@netscape.net 360-430-6780

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DAY 8: School Supplies/ASK: provides school supplies and grants to teachers; even virtual learning teachers have needs!

DAY 9: Community Sunday Dinner: 1,369 meals prepared and served; an average of 50-60 meals each week.

DAY 10: Literacy: 1500 books in Feed the Child bags; 1224 other books given away last year.

DAY 11: Membership/Hospitality: We maintain our ability to serve the community because we take care of our members first; We have fun, we care about each other, we support each other.

DAY 12: The Community that we serve and that in turn supports all of these projects! We put out an invitation for anyone that would like to join our club with contact information provided.

We received so much positive feedback that we plan to hold this "event" next year. Stay tuned!"

SPOKANE

According to **Janet Brougher**, Club President, "As we prepared our service budget for the year, we covered our commitments but held off on adding projects until we had a better idea about the effects of COVID. We did not schedule any fundraisers until March of 2021. We do have a small cushion to fund anything that may come up. We have not been together in person since March."

O, wind, if winter comes, can
spring be far behind?

– Percy Bysshe Shelley



Kindness is like snow — it
beautifies everything it covers.

– Kahlil Gibran

COVID can't keep Altrusans from Making a Difference



Darcey Ridgway, District Literacy Chair

After reading about Governor Brown's continued "freeze" in Oregon, my husband declared, "That's it. Christmas is cancelled." I yelled from the living room, "What??! Don't say that! Christmas will never be cancelled."

2020 has been a doozy of a year, but it has proven that there is another thing that will never be cancelled: The Altrusa Spirit.

Just look at the projects our District Twelve Clubs organized for Make a Difference Day:



• **Altrusa International of ALBANY** handed out books and "Bee Kind" T-shirts to children in the community – a great way to promote literacy and Altrusa in their area.

• **Altrusa International of HERMISTON** was present at each of their "Little Libraries" to hand out books and bookmarks containing Altrusa information and donated ice cream sandwiches! Hermiston's Little Libraries has been its literacy focus and even COVID 19 couldn't squelch that!

• **Janet Baker** of **Altrusa International of CAMPBELL RIVER** reported that because of the pandemic, they had a change in plans. Instead of sponsoring their "Halloween Book Give Away" the folks at Campbell River distributed several books per child and donated money for healthy snacks and lunches for the Rec and Read program in their community.

• **Altrusa International of MID-COLUMBIA** held an online book drive for the Children's Development Center. As with most organizations that help young children, they are in need of board books for ages 1-3. Mid-Columbia's goal is to provide the Center with \$2,000 in new books!



• The recipient of **Altrusa International of EUGENE'S** Make A Difference Day project was Sponsors, Inc. This group is a nonprofit organization that helps clients transition from prison to the community. The Eugene club collects and distributes items that clients will need in a more independent living situation such as pots and pans, brooms and dustpans, microwaves, coffee pots and other small appliances.

Darcey Ridgway



• **Altrusa International of CORVALLIS** held a luncheon on December 13th for the staff at College Hill in appreciation of all they do. College Hill is a public, alternative high school in Corvallis. Food was served in a COVID-friendly manner on colorful tablecloths.

Project chair **Carolyn Powers** wrote, "Sharon's veggie and fruit skewers were a huge hit and Mary Lou's brownies and Avonlea's muffins had them coming back for more!" We Altrusans are great cooks!

• **Altrusa International of OLYMPIA** and **Altrusa International of LAKE WASHINGTON EAST** donated money to their local food banks this year. We all know that because of the pandemic, food banks are in greater need and are having a difficult time assisting the growing numbers of people who need their help.



• **Altrusa International of PENDLETON'S** Make A Difference Day project was the Storytime Event at the local library. Kids arrived in their Halloween costumes, were read a story by the librarian, and headed upstairs to the gym to receive a book, treat, and a Halloween-themed craft project to complete at home. The children were placed in small groups so that all social distancing and COVID restrictions could be followed.



• "Muffin Madness" was this year's Make A Difference Day project for **Altrusa International of NANAIMO**. Members gathered at Country Club Mall to load up the baked goodies and headed to Georgia View Elementary School. Altrusans donated 107 dozen muffins for the kids' breakfast and lunch programs. Staff at the school greeted the members with carts and a trolley to fill the school freezers.

On a side note, the book that my daughter received at the Storytime event has now become her favorite. Little does she know that Santa is bringing her several books by the same author! It proves once again how important these events are to nourishing the love of reading in our communities.

It was such a pleasure reading about all of the great Make A Difference Day projects! Stay tuned for more literacy activities around the District!

DISTRICT MAILBOX

We are adding a new question and answer section into the DSB. It is highly likely that if you have a question on a topic, others may have the same question. Send your questions to your District Governor: rand@centurytel.net

'How do we determine if our projects are effective and continue to meet the needs of our community?'

It is highly recommended that Clubs take a formal approach to decisions regarding the projects it will continue to support. This can be achieved by completing the soon to be released **Project Review Form**.

Once your Club has its Strategic Plan completed then the Project Review Form will help make sure that projects help your club meet its stated goals. For a project to continue it needs to meet the goals laid out in the strategic plan. There have been instances where the continuation of certain projects has created tensions in clubs. Projects that were commenced years ago may not be as relevant now as they once were or your club may not have the human resources needed to undertake that project. The use of the Project Review Form will help ensure projects are effectively helping your club meet the needs of your community and your club.

District Board Winter Meeting

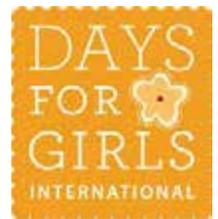
Rhonda Hauter, District Twelve Governor

The District Board met Virtually earlier this month. As always there was a full agenda. We made another attempt (fourth!!) at organizing District Conference due to the Pandemic. District Conference will be held in two parts this year.

The first will be held via Zoom in May. This will comprise the Business Sessions, Elections, Awards Ceremony, installation of your District Board and some fun events. The incoming Treasurers Workshop and the Incoming Presidents Workshop will be held virtually in late April/early May. The second part will be the 'in-person' Conference in Newport, Oregon in November, 2021. Additional details will be provided soon.

The Board approved a motion to restructure the District Treasurer role. One of the challenges we have faced is when the District Board is elected the current Treasurer leaves and there is no continuity to the incoming Treasurer and the new Board. This means we will separate the election of Treasurer to the middle year of the biennium. The intent here is to provide a better runway for incoming Treasurers by overlapping the Treasurer into the first year of a new Biennium. We will ask for your vote on this at our May Business meeting.

Growing the number of Clubs in our District is a key factor in our Growth. We have identified Boise, Idaho and Bellingham, Washington as two key areas of interest. Please reach out to your District Board if you have contacts, friends or family in either of these two cities.



YEAR END UPDATE FROM DAYS FOR GIRLS INTERNATIONAL

What a year! Thanks to you we made critical services possible this year for 204,000+ women and girls.

The pandemic drew stark contrasts emphasizing how period products and menstrual health information are essential necessities. Despite these challenges, the spirit and determination of girls didn't skip a beat. We made magic happen because we collectively believe that she's got this, if we've got her! Take a moment to join us in celebrating with her the gains she made. We are humbled by her bravery and her beauty.

[Year In Review 2020 canva.com](https://www.canva.com)



ALTRUSA CLUB OF NANAIMO

Christmas Swags

The Altrusa Club of Nanaimo was fortunate to be able to go ahead with our Annual Altrusa Christmas Swag sale this year. This is one of our biggest fundraisers and provides a big financial boost for our projects. Our team leader, Linda, had all her teams organized.

A couple of teams worked on cutting over 1,500 feet of ribbon and transforming it into 158 bows for our pre-ordered swags. Another team wired 474 pinecones to be added to the swags. Our cedar bough teams spent 2 days cutting and loading up trucks to transport the cedar to GREEN THUMB NURSURIES, who had generously cleared an area for us in their back workshop to safely assemble the swags. Another team cut and brought in the holly. Once everything was gathered, 6 teams of 5 people each, worked 6 shifts over 3 days to construct the swags. Then it was clean-up time (we want to be invited back) and off to deliver the swags. This project gave everyone a chance to participate, while under the influence of the Christmas Spirit. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

