

## **“SUPPORTING WOMEN, CHILDREN AND LITERACY”**

### **We had *THREE* New Members installed in September!**



Bobbie joined (through Vicki) Altrusa because of the diversified & evolving Club mandate. She loves how everyone dives right in with opinions or project reporting/initiating. “So progressive”! She loves being active outdoors, cooking, baking and reading. She and her husband Rob, have been married for 50 years, have 2 children and 4 grandchildren.

Rosanna heard about Altrusa through Trudi. She enjoyed the like-minded, friendly people and worthwhile projects that we do. Helping women and promoting literacy has always been dear to her heart. Born in Victoria, she moved to Nanaimo in 1982 after university. A former DVM, high school teacher and floral designer, she is currently a tutor with Literacy Nanaimo. She loves gardening, reading, crafting, breeding mini poodles and Shih Tzus, and spending time at her cottage on Salt Spring Island. She is also very involved with her church and on the executive.



As a result of Jan’s marketing blitz for our annual Garden Tour, Trish visited our gardens after hearing about it from the Nanaimo Photography Club. Later, Jan shared a list of our current projects with her to help her understand what we do and what she could do to further participate in our community. She was hooked!



## Care Bag Project

The care bag project started in 2006 at the request of a nurse at NRGH who worked in the emergency department. She told one of our members that women in crisis very often arrive at the hospital many times with nothing but the clothes they are wearing (and sometimes even those have to be taken for evidence of a crime). The nurses had been trying to help these women with toiletries and other personal items of their own but could not keep up with the demand. We were asked if this was something that we could help with.

The request was brought to our members, and it was decided that this was a project that fit our Altrusa values. We decided that if we were going to help out, we should provide individual packages for the women in need. We felt the best way to package the items was in a cloth bag that could be used by the women once they left the hospital. The first bags were made from fabric that members had on hand and were not using. The bags were about 10" X 12" with a drawstring closure. The contents were the same items that the nursing staff had provided, toothbrush, small toothpaste, hand cream, deodorant, lip gloss, face cloth, hand towel, a bar of soap, shampoo, comb and a small note pad and pencil. It was soon determined that we would need much more fabric, so furniture companies and upholsterers were contacted for donations of their discontinued fabric samples, they were more than happy to give them to us. Once we had the fabric, we set up work parties to sort and match up the fabric samples. Usually about 5 -6 members would get together and spend an afternoon sorting and matching the fabrics for the bags. One or two members would then sew the bags after which another work party was organized to stuff the bags with the items. We soon learned that there were other organizations that could use the care bags for women in crisis and provided the bags to them as well. Originally, we supplied six organizations with the Care Bags but with changes in how services are being provided we now deliver to Haven Society, ICCS which is Samaritan Place and their affiliated locations.

During Covid we were not able to continue getting together to sort fabric and fill the bags so just a few individuals carried on the work. The club is now returning to the original process of sorting fabric and stuffing the bags. Since this project began, we have distributed over 10,000 bags to women in crisis. We also use them as gifts for speakers and sell them to members and friends to raise funds for the project.



New member Trish, jumped in to help with her first task for Altrusa, along with Cheryl, Trudi and Penny here at work preparing fabric samples for sewing into Care Bags.

Thank you to Marean for providing the history on this special ongoing project.

*It's not where you go or what you do its who is beside you that counts.*

## June has left the building...

June is a retired school teacher from Toronto. She taught the Earline reading method to young children. June joined Altrusa in June 1995. She was on the board as a director in 1996 and 1997, Vice President in 1998 and 1999 and President in 2000 and 2001.

June always felt that the library delivery service was one of the most important projects that we had. She and her husband were very involved in setting up and maintaining the three routes for delivery. Every time we had new people for delivery, June and her husband Cliff would get in their car and drive until they found the quickest and most efficient routes. Every three weeks she updated client information, added instructions to the delivery binders, and scheduled volunteer drivers. June looked after the book delivery drivers and was always available for book selection as well. Her husband passed in 2015.

One of the small projects June asked us to do was the clean up of a garden in south Nanaimo – on Jingle Pot Road. She had heard from a friend that the elderly couple that lived there were asked by the city to clean up their yard but neither of them could do it or afford to hire anyone to help. June asked us to help and about 6 members showed up and cleaned up that garden for them.

June is a great ambassador for our Club and represented Altrusa at many public events. She is always on the lookout for new members and gave presentations to a number of organizations.

She loves to participate in celebrations, whether it's stories at our Christmas Party or planting trees on International Women's Day. She involved her family in Altrusa too, by bringing her grandsons to StoryWalks and inviting her daughter to our Retreat as a speaker. June is a former teacher and brings that skill to our Club. She is a great advocate for people living on the autism spectrum. She keeps up-to-date on new breakthroughs and is a consultant for the Irlen Method.

June has chosen to move back to Ontario where most of her family resides. She has sold her house and has already moved. She was accompanied by son, Beric, to her last Altrusa meeting before she leaves.



June loved birds. She was given a special mug and trivet with birds on it. Thank you, farewell, and be safe.



## Another donation for Haven

Haven's wish list was for towels & twin sheet sets. Rose from Haven accepts 5 sets of each from Cheryl



## Cedar Woman House



Meagan from CWH accepts board books by author Roy Henry Vickers along with a Doctor Play Kit & notebooks for journaling purposes. Also donated are adult colouring books and no tear shampoo and cream rinse.

## ICCS



Staff at ICCS accepting Care bags & supplies as well as personal donations. Thanks Cheryl for taking over all of these supplies

## Make a Difference Day – Feed a Reader

We can all agree that we accomplish more when we have food in our tummies. The same holds true for children. It has been proven that children learn more effectively when they can concentrate on their studies instead of a growling tummy. We proudly delivered over 80 dozen muffins to Fairview School on October 10<sup>th</sup>. Fairview is a new location for us and we are so happy to be able to help feed the children. We look forward to bringing more to the school in the spring. Great job organizing Verena and Nicole!





## **Campbell River Retreat Taku Lodge, Quadra Island**

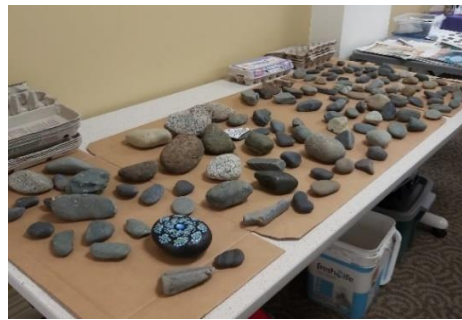


Verena and Nicole traveled to Quadra Island to join our Campbell River Sisters at their retreat. They had a wonderful time and highly recommend attending again.

## **Our Own Retreat**

At the end of September, we had our own annual Retreat at Nanaimo Seniors Village. We painted rocks for the Haven gardens and play area. The councilors at Haven often use them with the children to engage them in a fun activity to distract them from the life they just left behind. There were a lot of Halloween and Christmas themed rocks as well as general themed rocks. After painting these glorious pieces of art, we sat down to a “build your own sandwich” lunch. Ham, turkey, cheddar and Swiss cheese with all the fixins’ was on the menu. We also served pickles, olives, chips and an orange if you so desired. Dessert was sweet treats brought in by our members. Special thanks go to Sue and Donna whose idea it was to do this fun task and who also hauled in all the rocks as well as provided the expertise and instruction. The multitude of paint colours and brushes were donated by Marean. Thanks to all.





In the afternoon, Colin from The Backyard Wildbird and Nature Store gave us a fascinating talk about the birds in our area. He discussed different foods needed to draw birds as well as the types of houses they like. It was a very informative and fun talk.

## Scarves and hoodies for those who need it most



Once again, this year we received a donation of handmade knitted scarves & hoodies from Linda M. in Campbell River. Her mission is to help the homeless or impoverished people be warm in winter. Cheryl delivered 10 to Cedar Woman House & the balance to Nanaimo Women Helping Women as they not only help woman in crisis, but also the unhoused.

## Soap for Hope



Vicki introduced our October speaker, Founder and Executive Director Anne McIntyre, who travelled from Victoria to tell us about the Soap for Hope charity: Their main focus is collecting discarded toiletries and linens from hotels and distributing those to people in need, which reduces waste in our landfills at the same time. In 2022 they diverted 136,110 pounds of used products from the landfill and distributed 2.76 million products to local Community Facilities in need.

Anne welcomes financial donations to help purchase a plastic shredding machine. Members are also welcome to donate shampoo, lotion, towels, sheets, etc. Donna volunteered to collect any items (new or used) that Altrusans wish to donate. Vicki presented Anne with a tote bag in appreciation.

<https://www.soapforhopecanada.ca>



## Nanaimo Science



Our speaker for November was Elaine (bottom left) from Nanaimo Science. Nanaimo Science is your source for hands-on-science education and fun! Their programs are specifically geared to children and their families, as well as teachers and their students. “We make learning about science, technology, engineering, math and sustainability an engaging experience for children”. They offer many options to learn, from daily after-school activities and day camps. It is science driven with hands-on games, crafts and outdoor fun. During our meeting, we made a little whirligig, we had so much fun bringing out the child in each of us.

Elaine graduated from Carleton University with a Bachelor of Science (Psychology) and a Bachelor of Arts (English) in 2000. After completing graduate studies at the University of Alberta in Developmental Psychology and Curriculum Development, she found her passion working with non-profit societies, particularly with post-secondary students.

## Emergency Drop at Haven

Nicole received an emergency call from Sarah at Haven House on Tuesday afternoon (Dec 5) that they only had one or two children’s bags left. They had had a few larger families come into the shelter. They were expecting another family with 5 kids within the next few days.

Late last summer, we were advised that they still had several welcome children craft bags remaining in stock so we left her with ten additional bags. Based on history, this number of bags should have lasted until early spring. Sadly, the need was greater these past few months. The team went to work. Janice G had 12 bags sewn and ready to go already stuffed with an activity book, Janice S got stuffies and hygiene products together and I went shopping for craft items.

On Friday afternoon, I dropped another 10 completed welcome craft bags for the kids at Haven House and they were so pleased! The worker I met with told me how she had recently given a bag to a little girl and she was so thrilled and said it was the best thing. Thank you to everyone for stepping up.



## Winter Fundraiserr



This year we did something a little different. We used the Fundraiser "Growing Smiles" to sell winter greenery and plants to our members and friends of Altrusa. For our first time using this method, we did pretty darn good. Of course, we didn't raise the amount of money we used to, when we made door swags but I'm calling it a success. Including donations, we raised \$1119.28!! Janice G graciously let us use her garage (and home) for the better part of two days. She fed us too! Both Janices' worked tirelessly to unload the plants (118 pieces) and distribute to clients who purchased. They were my right-hand girls. Shirley handled and reported the sales and collected the cash and cheques. Great team work girls!! I believe Janice G's husband, Roger, was also nominated for sainthood for his assistance for this whole thing. We couldn't do it with out everyone's support. We might even do another selling spring flowers. Thank you.



## A trip to Courtenay

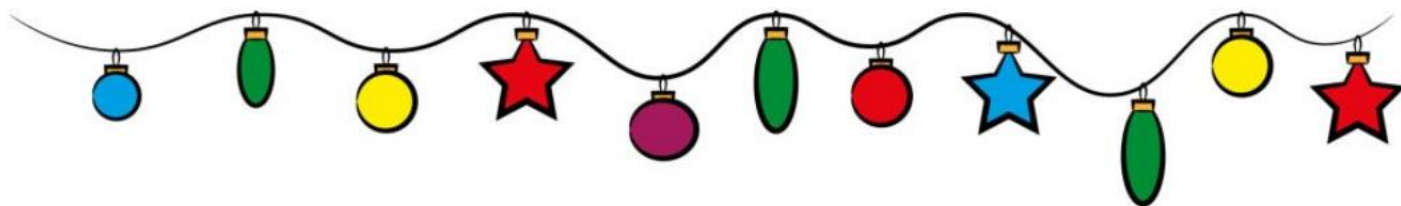


In October a small contingent headed off to Courtenay to learn, via Zoom, about using Social Media and software options. Janice S, Trudi and Elizabeth carpooled for the drive. Janice G met everyone there while visiting her daughter. There were some connection glitches but eventually a few things were learned. Lunch was catered and the ride home safe and uneventful. All in all, a good day.

## The Great Nanaimo Toy Drive

During the week of December 11<sup>th</sup>, several of our members volunteered their time to help out at the Toy Drive. Tasks varied from sorting and setting up, to taking the parents around to choose just the right toy for their children. Since 1982, Altrusa has had a long-standing part in this Toy Drive. Below, the “Janices” and I were there helping to get ready for the first day opening on the next day. Janice G and I cut many tables clothes that will be used as tree skirts. Janice S labelled and boxed dozens of gift cards for teens. This is an extremely well-run event with a long history. We are extremely proud to be a part of it.





## Our Christmas Lunch Celebration

We had a fantastic number of members who gathered at the Nanaimo Golf Club for a Christmas Turkey dinner. Thanks to a group of ladies (Val, Zoe Ann, Bobbie, Pat) who prepared our places at the table with party favours. When we were seated each person had a cute ornament and a small wrapped parcel of chocolates. After lunch we held an auction where many of our members brought in various items from their homes. Some baked, some made jams, and one took orders for homemade pies. Roberta made cute little bears and mice that were hand sewn and embroidered. There were beautiful artificial flower arrangements, pieces of art and tableware. There was wine with gnome hats, lovely scarves, cushions and even new sets of Tupperware. Oh my gosh, so many great items! Too many to mention all. Ann (Vanna) showcased each item and took them to every one of the tables so everyone could see what to bid on. Linda played auctioneer and had to facilitate a couple of bidding wars. In the end we made over \$1000! Holy cow! I think that was the most we've ever made in an in-house auction. Special thanks to Janice S for setting up all of the arrangements for our lunch. Needless to say, it was a very successful day.







## CALENDAR

### JANUARY

- Board Nomination Committee Election at Business Meeting
- District Award Submissions – Members

### FEBRUARY

- Board Candidates Presented
- Coldest Night of the Year

### MARCH

- Election of Board – Lunch Meeting
- President to Submit Board names to District
  - Selection of Conference Delegates
  - District Award submissions deadlines
- Make a Difference Day 2<sup>nd</sup> Muffin Delivery
- Foundation Grant submission by 15<sup>th</sup>.

### ON-GOING

- Library Book delivery, Haven weeding & garden care, care bags, new member initiations, speakers, newsletter submissions, fundraisers, Altrusa planter, media coverage.



## MONTHLY MEETINGS

### BOARD MEETINGS

1st Tuesday

1:00 pm

To be held at a member's home.

### BUSINESS MEETINGS

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday 7:00 pm

Nanaimo Seniors Village

6089 Uplands Drive

### LUNCH SOCIALS

4th Tuesday

Noon

Various restaurants

Announced every month



Janice S - Jan 2

Sue R - Jan 10

Helen S - Jan 18

June F - Jan 21

Pat W - Jan 23

Trudi M - Jan 25

Vicki C - Jan 30

Verena - Feb 10

Roberta C - Feb 13

Valerie - Feb 18

Patricia F - Mar 1

Holly H - Mar 4

Elizabeth P - Mar 10

Trish - Mar 14

Margaret J - Mar 23

Cathy L - Mar 30



# Happy New Year!



We gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance of the Province of British Columbia

Grateful to live, work and enjoy the unceded territories of the Snuneymuxw,  
Snaw-naw-as, and Stzuminus people

*Until next time, be well, stay well.*