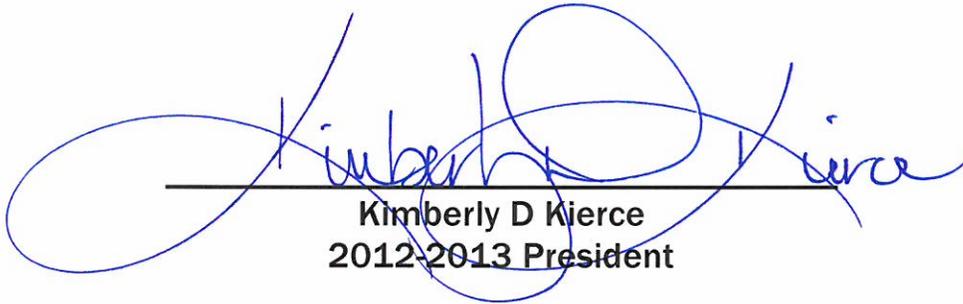


EDITH DeBUSK PRESIDENT'S AWARD

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL CLUB REPORT

Altrusa International, Inc. of RICHARDSON



Kimberly D Kierce
2012-2013 President

Discover Altrusa: Your Passport to Adventure

Wow! What an Adventure! It is hard to believe that I was standing here a year ago as your newly installed president. My parents attended, so proud of their little girl. But, little did I know one short year later, my dad would no longer be by my side. It is amazing the difference a year can make. At my installation, I was proud to have my mom and dad by my side, supporting me as I took on this new chapter of my life. My parents always supported me in pursuing my dreams – especially my dad. At the time, we did not know my dad was sick – but he actually had been for many years. We did not know how much he was suffering – he was the strong and silent type. However, we quickly learned the magnitude and extent of his illness and less than a year later, he is gone. A hard-fought battle that many of us have seen take place in our own lives with those we love. Please join me in a moment of silence for all those we have lost, AND more importantly, a moment of prayer and strength for all those survivors still by our sides, still valiantly fighting the good fight - today... Thank you.

The year has passed quickly - Full of ups n' downs and twists n' turns – but that is what makes an adventure so memorable - and what a memorable year this was! It was full of challenges, great joys, and successes. I want to thank you, Richardson Altrusans, for giving me the opportunity to serve as your president this past year. It has been a successful year because of each and every one of you. Your dedication of service to the community is remarkable, but as individuals – you are truly amazing women! We are leading to a better community thanks to your dedication and passion. You have made an impact – you have made a significant difference in the lives of those in our community – locally and internationally!

Theme and Goals

I chose as my theme, *Discover Altrusa: Your Passport to Adventure* And oh, the places we have been this year! My goals were simple: Serve, Explore, Participate, and Share. I distributed actual Altrusa Passports to each and every member at my installation as a tangible reminder of my theme and goals for the coming year. I was excited to see so many of you take up your passport to adventure and see how far it would take you. Everyone fully embraced this theme in the many projects that were conducted this year and everyone helped us achieve our goals.

My first set of goals was to Serve and Explore, which naturally go hand-in-hand for any Altrusan. I encouraged members to Serve - be a part of club activities and play an active role in Altrusa's mission: Leading to a Better Community®. I encouraged members to Explore - enhance and expand our current projects and seek out new ones that may better serve the community's needs. Richardson Altrusans embraced these goals by taking on leadership roles, gathering consensus, and recruiting volunteers to complete some wonderful projects... and, as you will hear later, we definitely achieved that goal!

My second set of goals was to Participate and Share, which are also inevitably linked as well. I encouraged members to Participate - Be active.... Be present.... Be involved Get out in the community and share Altrusa with others – Invite friends, co-workers, and acquaintances to meeting and events, and encourage other to be a part of something great. We have seen many new faces this year. My goal was to initiate 8 new members and I am delighted to report that 12 phenomenal new members have accepted membership in our club this year.

Altrusans, we have lift-off!

To kick off the club year, each Foundation and Administration Committees met to make plans for the year with the club goals in mind. Our Foundation Committees are Ability House, Community Outreach, Education, International Relations, Seniors, Scholarships, and New Members Committees. Our Administration Committees are Membership Retention, Membership Recruitment, Leadership Development, Strategic Planning, Programs, Finance and Communication. Each committee

evaluated how it currently serves the community and the club and explored new ways to reach out, while encouraging participation and sharing Altrusa with others.

In order to keep the members connected to the committees and the committees connected to the Board, I assigned Board Members to be Committee Liaisons for each Foundation and Administration Committee. The Liaison was the direct link to communicate to and from the Board about committee events, activities, and projects, which helped facilitate coordination of projects among all committees and created cohesiveness in all the groups.

So, did we Discover Altrusa this year? Let's review our Passport:

Program Committee

The Program Committee, consisting of Mary Ostentowski, Cindy McIntyre and Gay McAlister, explored the "adventure theme" and got the ball rolling by setting up monthly program meeting centered on adventure by securing speakers and presentations to keep members engaged. In July, "Adventures of Super Woman" presented by Betty Murray provided insight into how to balance life, work and play. "Adventures Abroad" with Australian-born travel agent, Robbert Van Blooendahl, inspired members to attend the 2013 International Convention in Rotorura by sharing the great wonders of New Zealand and Australia. In September, "Adventures in Literary" helped celebrate literacy month with a heartfelt presentation by Tim Madigan, journalist and author of the critically acclaimed nonfiction book, "I'm Proud of You: My Friendship with Fred Rogers ", about his life-long friendship with the infamous Mr. Rogers. Author and humorist Dru Bookout explored "Adventures in Joy" by reminding us to laugh and enjoy all the goodness in life. In November, we were given a crash course in "Avoiding MIS-Adventures" by Richardson Police Department Assistant Chief Rhonda Bonner as she spoke about staying safe in our home and out in public.

December was a unique celebration with a "Holiday Adventure and International Passport Celebration" with entertainment provided by the international dance group drummers of Yallah! Dance Co. In January, and in an adventure closer to home, we explored "Adventures in Richardson", presented by the Richardson Chamber of Commerce Director of Economic Development, Sue Walker, as she shared insights into all the synergy that is happening in the corporate community of Richardson. Sue Walker was so impressed with our organization that she was eager to join us and was initiated just a few weeks ago as one of the newest members of our club. Welcome, Sue! We are glad to have you aboard our Altrusa Adventure. February found us celebrating our 47th "Altrusa Adventure Birthday Party" with our special guest, District Nine Director Linda Moore, as she shared updates from District and International. In March, "The 12-Stone Adventure" took us on a journey to Nepal where Heifer International plays a significant role in eradicating illiteracy and poverty among women. As you can see, Altrusans were given the opportunity to explore many aspects of life as we "Discover Altrusa: Your Passport to Adventure".

Ability House Committee

Ability House Committee, under the leadership of Barbara Cornelius and Jan Skinner, had a great year of support and friendship for the resident of Ability House, a group home for six adults severely disabled with cerebral palsy. We make a significant difference in the lives of Vera, Shelly, Nina, Robert, Roberto, and Kathleen. When they see us, they always have a smile on their face. Vera is always eager to greet us with big hugs. Shelly and Nina enjoy sharing stories about their family and their recent experiences. With a huge grin, Robert excitedly holds up the right number of fingers as a reminder of just how many more months until his next birthday. Roberto is quiet and shy but we see his excitement when we come to visit. Kathleen is visited frequently by her family and eagerly waits at the window for their car to drive up and encourages us to join her to be on the lookout for them driving up. All the residents have become members of our extended Altrusa family in their special way.

The Committee provided service by planning several social events throughout the year, including: 7 birthday parties complete with lots of cake, soda, presents, hugs and laughter; holidays were

celebrated with delivery of Thanksgiving dinner, a Chamberlain Ballet performance of The Nutcracker at the Eisemann Center, a Christmas party complete with holiday decorations and food, presents for everyone, and lots of holiday cheer shared with several family members of the residents who joined the celebration. Easter, Halloween and Valentine's day were also celebrated in their own special way.

This year, we explored new ways to help our friends at Ability House. We were able to fund the purchase of a much needed new freezer for the resident's home. Also new this year was a caregiver appreciation party. The daily needs of the residents are many and I have always been amazed by the caregivers who are by their side day-in and day-out. We kicked off the club year with a caregiver appreciation party in June. Altrusans celebrated and honored those who have devoted their lives to the daily well-being and dignity of those they serve. Each caregiver was given a gift card and a hand-made bracelet (for the women) or keychain (for the men), which were donated by the International Relations Committee *TeachHaiti* project (jewelry made by Haitian students). The respect and friendship these caregivers give to each and every residents to help make their lives more complete and whole is amazing and Altrusans are thankful for their dedication to our friends at Ability House. We were honored to celebrate them in this way.

In all, members participated by donating 162 volunteer hours to this committee's activities and the Committee's budget of \$1,800 paid for the events and activities mentioned above plus the monthly cable bill for the resident home.

Altrusa Richardson was recognized as the 2013 Outstanding Organization by Ability Connection Texas (ACT), the organization that oversees Ability House, for our ongoing support – socially and financially – for our extended Altrusa family members at Ability House!

Community Outreach

Community Outreach had an outstanding year which was kicked off by conducting a member survey to gauge interest and support for the coming year. Co-chairs, Sue McElveen and Marsha Peters, continued to serve the community by supporting many NETWORK of Community Ministries programs by conducting a School Supply drive which provided nearly \$400 in much needed school supplies for children in Richardson ISD; collecting over 100 pounds of food for the NETWORK pantry; continuing the collection of toiletry items (especially travel-sized items); and participating in the Santa Program by providing new unwrapped toys for those less fortunate. The Committee continued its support of Richardson Reads One Book by providing and organizing all the ushers for the well-attended, community-wide author lecture event and supporting literacy by making a \$750 donation on behalf of Altrusa Richardson. Altrusans also supported literacy by contributing to the Friends of the Library (FOL) book sale.

The Committee took exploration to a new level by instituting several new projects. Altrusans started a new project with Camp Summit by helping serve dinner on Sunday night to campers. Altrusa was able to reinstitute a project that was left behind many years ago but still holds great need in the community today. Operation Safe Haven is project conducted in conjunction with the Richardson Police Department and The Counseling Place to provide emergency shelter to families fleeing from domestic violence. Altrusa provides funding for families to stay in a local hotel at a reduced rate as arrangements are being made with a local shelter to house them and help them get back on their feet.

The Committee sought feedback about a new way to best help our community and the resoundingly successful "Chili n' Totes" came to life. The "Chili n' Totes" project benefited the New Beginnings Women Shelter by providing nearly 100 donated, red, reusable Target tote bags filled with full-size personal items like lotions, soaps, and shampoos. The Committee collected toiletry items at several club meetings and purchased several items at local discount stores. Altrusans were asked to join at a member's home for the assembling of tote bags. With over 25 members planning to attend, the host of this event volunteered to make chili for everyone and attendees were asked to bring a side dish or desert – and the Chili n Totes project was born! For such a simple concept,

friends getting together over bowls of chili to fill tote bags of much needed personal items, the impact of this project on the lives we touched was priceless.

In all, members participated by donating 323 volunteer hours to this committee's activities and the Committee's budget of \$1,800 paid for the events and activities mentioned above, plus numerous in-kind donations to make this year a success.

Education Committee

Education Committee Co-Chairs Brenda Moreland and Ann Payne continued Altrusa's support of Richardson ISD Terrace Elementary through a variety of new and engaging projects and well as our on-going signature projects. "Homework Backpacks" continue to educate and engage children. Altrusans planned and created 13 different homework activity backpacks that are taken home on loan each week by Pre-K students at Terrace Elementary. The activities are interactive and creative to keep the interest of 4 to 5 year olds. Simple instructions are included with each backpack to guide parents in working with their children. By providing these themed backpacks filled with hands-on exercises and activities, children and family members are encouraged to participate in the learning process at home. Every Wednesday, Altrusans Mary Osentowski and Linda Korn went through each of the 13-themed backpacks to inventory all the items and replenish any consumable items. The children considered it a privilege to possess one of the backpacks and took pride in returning them safely and on time.

Andrea Rutledge and Pat Hansen organized and facilitated "Wednesdays Club" in which 16 students selected by their teachers for their attitudes, abilities, and conduct, participate in creative activity sessions led by Altrusa volunteers every Wednesday. The students studied fossils, created felt mitten puppets, staged a play with their puppets, flew kites, and other activities. Altrusans leading this group frequently heard "I love Wednesday Club" from these eager learners.

The Committee organized, chaperoned, and funded transportation and admission for various field trips throughout the year including Santa's Village (a park filled with kid-size houses with special themes) for 100 children (Pre-K, special needs Pre-K, and Kindergarten classes), the Perot Museum of Nature and Science for an interactive experience for approximately 60 children (primarily 4th graders but also a select group of Kindergarten students), and a Family Theater performance (coordination provided by Altrusan Sarah Nesbit) at the Eisemann Center for Performing Arts for an opportunity not often afforded to these young children. Back by popular demand, the Committee hosted Texas' only "Bubble Lady" to perform in an assembly for Pre-K through 2nd graders that included loads of scientific lessons, fun, and bubble blowing.

The Manners Party, which according to Big Bird and Elmo, was a resounding success. The 2-day event involved 43 excited Pre-K children who picked out a book to give to another student and they wrapped the gift. The next day, the children arrived with much excitement to a classroom full of Sesame Street theme party décor. Presents were shared, expressions of "please", "thank you", and "you're welcome" were openly-expressed and books were enjoyed.... along with tasty party snacks! At the conclusion of the party, Altrusans were greeted with many exclamations of "thank you" and heartfelt hugs from all the children as they truly enjoyed the book wrapping, book giving, and book receiving.

Teddy Bear Time had a new curriculum and structure this year and Altrusans answered the call to support this 16-week project that encourages parental involvement in the child's education and literary development through fun, interactive activities. In the Fall and Spring, 15 Pre-K children and their parents attended evening sessions coordinated by Altrusans. The lessons focused on improving reading, math, letters, sounds, and motor skills. Parents were given tools to continue the work at home and the children received a new book at every session to encourage building their own reading library at home.

The International Pen Pal project was implemented by Barbara Berthold and Jane Tucker, to enhanced literacy and built friendship across international borders between Ms. Baxter's 4th grade class and School of Hope 4th graders in Port-Au-Prince Haiti, supported by the *TeachHaiti*

organization. This exchange of letters promoted sharing of information about each country and its culture through a child's eye; thereby expanding the understating and appreciation of the young children – a very enriching literacy project. In addition to sending letters between the schools, the children of Terrace Elementary created and shared hand-made bookmarks which included their school photo while the children of School of hope created and shared jewelry and paper crafts. The sharing of these personally created items are tangible symbols of their international friendship.

In another project with an international twist and adventure, special thanks goes to Barbara Berthold and Mary Beth McLemore for facilitating in the Heifer International Donation Project with Ms Baxter's 4th grade class. The children were given the honor of choosing the country and animals to be donated. The children were guided through a discussion about living on a farm and the importance of the Heifer Project to create sustainable agriculture and commerce. Information sheets were handed out and students divided into groups to make decisions about how to spend the \$150 donation, which to them was a lot of money! Four countries were selected and the animals were chosen with reasoning provided for each decision. This was a great project to enhance literacy and math skills, and emphasize fiscal responsibility, while learning about other cultures. At the end of the day, each child was given a Heifer flag to show that they were ambassadors of Heifer International.

In all, members participated by donating 611 volunteer hours to this committee's activities and the Committee's budget of \$1,800 (plus \$150 from Altrusa International award) paid for the events and activities mentioned above to enrich the youth of Richardson.

Seniors Committee

Seniors Committee continued to support this very important segment of our population in a variety of ways led by co-chairs Sandy Martin and Gloria Sandoval. "Tie One On for Father's Day" kicked off the year with a classic car show and entertainment at Friends Place Adult Day Services. Monthly Atria Bingo events continue to entertain residents of the Atria Senior Living Community. September found Altrusans registering hundreds and hundreds of walkers for the Walk to End Alzheimers in Allen at Celebration Park. In the Fall and in the Spring, Appletree Court Auction continued to be a highlight for these residents as they compete to outbid the next resident for some fabulous auction items donated and purchased by Richardson Altrusans – what great entertainment! And, we cannot forget, the recently celebrated Mother's Day Tea at Friend's Place Adult Day Services, which found attendees donning their favorite spring hat - was a wonderful treat for everyone who attended.

The quarterly Lone Star Book Rotation Program continued this year - but with several new faces. This project is part of a grant the State of Texas gave the Richardson Public Library to purchase books to take to participating senior living facilities. It involves hundreds of large print books from the Richardson Public Library loaded into numerous rolling carts and Richardson Altrusans, in coordination with these participating senior living facilities in the Richardson area, replenishing their libraries rotate the books from facility to facility on a quarterly basis and. This year, to help with this labor-intensive task, we found some much needed assistance and manpower in The Exchange Club of Richardson – this was a very successful partnership for both of our organizations and, I am happy to say, will continue in the coming year.

Altrusan Carolyn Swanson was awarded \$1,000 by Texas Instruments as part of their community retiree support grant program for her volunteer work and her mother, Ernestine Swanson, was also awarded \$300 by PNM for her volunteer work. Carolyn and Ernestine designated their money to go to a new project that would support Senior Pets. In the beginning, it was unclear to me if that meant seniors citizens looking for a pet or an older pet looking for an owner. After a few meetings with the Richardson Animal Shelter Director, I learned that it applied to both – Senior citizens were in need of older/senior pets - a hyperactive puppy is not the best companion for a older person who may have limited mobility or special needs and older pets are often harder to adopt. So, the ASAPP (Altrusa Sisters Adoption Pet Palace) project was born! A room at the animal shelter will be remodeled and

outfitted with video cameras for posting on the city website to facilitate pet adoptions and Altrusa Richardson will have a plaque on the room and scrolling marquee on the website video to enhance our visibility in the community. This project was initiated just last month so I look forward to its implementation in the coming year.

In all, members participated by donating 187 volunteer hours to this committee's activities and the Committee's budget of \$250 (plus the \$1,300 in grants) paid for the events and activities mentioned above in addition to in-kind donations.

New Members Committee

This year, I wanted a New Members Committee, which is comprised of the new members from the previous club year, to assist them in creating bonds amongst themselves and also to see an Altrusa project from inception, to development, to implementation, and to completion. I asked the committee to focus on the club's Make A Difference Day project so the new members would also see how our club projects are linked to District as well as International as they developed a one-day literacy focused project. This year's committee was led by Immediate Past President Bonnie Perry and new members Julie Horan and Ginger Toni with the support of Pat Griffin, Stefanie Carter, and Lisa DePrato. The Committee chose their project to focus on two hospitals that serve children who have cancer. This Make a Difference Day project included several Altrusans collecting and purchasing books as well as making coloring books for these children. On October 27, Toni and fellow volunteers gather at Methodist Richardson Medical Center while Julie and her group gathered at Children's Hospital at Medical Cities Hospital to each made donations of children's books and small hand-made coloring books complete with crayons – surely to make a child's stay at each of these hospitals a little more bearable. The Committee then reported their project to District Nine and Altrusa International as required. The coloring books from this project were so successful that they were continued as part of the "Chili n Totes" project mentioned earlier. In all, members participated by donating 60 volunteer hours to this committee's activities. Great job, Ladies, on a very successful project!

Scholarship Committee

The Scholarship Committee certainly had their work cut out for them this year with a record number of scholarship applications – 76 to be exact. The Committee, led by Mary Osentowski and Liz Luthans, scoured through the applications, conducted interviews, and awarded scholarships to 4 ambitious high school students to help them pursue their dreams. Medical Scholarships were presented by new member Irene Strejic to 3 very deserving and dedicated women in the medical profession. The April dinner program showcased all our scholarship recipients as they shared their goals and aspirations and thanked Altrusa Richardson for being an important part of making their dreams become a reality.

In all, members participated by donating 287 volunteer hours to reviewing applications and planning for the scholarship dinner and awarded a total of \$5,500.

International Relations Committee

What can I say about this Committee but... Wow! They were honored as first place recipients of the 2011-2012 Dr. Nina Fay Calhoun International Relations award – for the second time in a row... and they have continued this outstanding effort this past year. Barbara Berthold and Jane Tucker are the dynamic duo that led this committee again this year.

The year kicked off with a once-in-a-lifetime, amazing opportunity to showcase Richardson and Altrusa Hospitality at the Japan America Grassroots Summit, and annual event aimed at strengthening peaceful inter-country relationships. Barbara Berthold along with Betty Peck did an outstanding job of organizing and planning for this historic event. Over 150 Japanese visitors came to North Texas as Summit participants, of which 20 came to Richardson, and through Barbara and Betty's leadership and innovation they helped the Richardson Summit organizers plan, prepare, and

implement the greeting of these Japanese visitors at Richardson City Hall in August 2012 and was a principal organizer of the Japan America Grassroots Summit - Richardson Progressive Dinner in September 2012. It was Barbara's idea for an American style progressive dinner, which featured different Richardson homes sharing Texas hospitality and distinctive foods and showcasing different local artist groups (musical and visual) at each home. The Progressive Dinner was well attended with over 80 participants and was a resounding success thanks to her leadership and organization - important bonds of friendship and understanding were forged between the Richardson community and our Japanese visitors that will last a lifetime. One attendee commented, "I thought Richardson displayed a real family camaraderie hosting JAG, which is what makes Richardson so special!" Our very own Richardson Altrusan Jean Stuart even hosted one of the Japanese visitors to stay in her home for the 5-day event. Many Altrusans came together to greet our Japanese visitors at Billy Bob's Texas and at Richardson City Hall for a very welcoming reception and we displayed gracious hospitality and friendship during the amazingly successful Progressive Dinner. We did it up in true Texas style, with a lot of Altrusa Richardson Hospitality!

We reached out internationally in other ways this year as well. Several members attended the TeachHaiti Orientation event last summer which prompted the creation of the International Pen Pal Project with the Terrace Elementary through the Education Committee. They also collaborated with the children at Terrace Elementary on the Heifer International Donation Project mentioned earlier. We recognized all United Nations Days through email notification reminders and hands-on projects and presentations during business and dinner meetings, for example, we all wore orange at our November Dinner Meeting in honor of United Nations Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Altrusa Richardson proudly sponsored our second student, Senayda Isabela Torres Medina, from HELPS International. Last year, we shared the excitement of our first student's graduation and were honored to continue our support for this young Guatemalan student as we get the unique opportunity to see her grow and flourish from Kindergarten to 6th grade. We look forward to hearing from her periodically throughout the year.

Our international focus also found us reading books alongside our sister club in New Zealand as participants of the Altrusa District Fifteen Great Read. We decorated denim quilt squares for the American Hero's Quilt Project for wounded military personnel in hospitals overseas. We donated shoes and socks to Operation Care International, a non-profit organization that hosted over 9,000 homeless at the Dallas Convention Center for the largest Christmas party for the homeless, in which food, clothing, and services were distributed to those in need in a festive and safe environment.

Jane Tucker's dedication and passion for BeadsForLife (which supports women of Uganda) and TeachHaiti (which supports students in Haiti) have provided many of us with some new, colorful, and unique jewelry. The jewelry was sold at several meetings, Altrusa Marketplace, and District Nine Conference so everyone had an opportunity to participate - and look fabulously unique! Through her efforts, we netted a total of \$1,395 going back to these organizations (\$1,045 to BeadsForLife and \$350 to TeachHaiti) to support their mission.

In all, members participated by donating 359 volunteer hours to this committee's activities and the Committee's budget of \$1,150 supported the events and activities mentioned above in addition to in-kind donations.

Leadership Development

Leadership Development conducted a Fall and Spring event under the direction of Janet Vance and Liz Luthans. In the Fall, StrengthsFinder II was conducted as a follow-up to the very successful StrengthsFinder I event last Spring. Twenty attendees, which included members of Altrusa Garland and District Nine Governor LaVone Arthur, took part in event. In the Spring, the Committee, in partnership with Membership Retention, presented "Take a Ride on the Carousel Altrusa!" that focused on fostering enrichment, energy, engagement, and excitement in our club and encouraged members to explore new ideas to keep our club fresh and new. Members from other local Altrusa

clubs also attended this event. Small group discussions explored strategies to keep seasoned members energized and to keep new members engaged – information sure to yield great success in the coming year.

In all, members participated by donating 661 volunteer hours to this committee's activities and the Committee's budget of \$300 provided invaluable leadership training for our members as well as others in the community.

Strategic Planning Committee

Kay George and Jean Stuart led the Strategic Planning Committee to keep our club moving forward. By setting goals, objectives, strategies, and action plans, we are better positioned as a club to achieve our goals of success. This living document is the cornerstone of our club and the dedication of this committee to keep it alive is much appreciated. Several new members were a part of this committee this year and their fresh viewpoint and out-of-the-box thinking is what keeps us a vibrant club. Members contributed 92 volunteer hours to keeping our Strategic Plan alive.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee Co-Chairs Janice Swallow and Janie Jaquier along with the Audit Committee and Grant Committee have done a good job of keep us within budget and ensuring that we are fiscally sound and responsible steward of our money. Altrusa Richardson awarded \$4,600 in grants to 8 organizations to fund projects that are in alignment with Altrusa's mission. We donated \$300 to Altrusa International Foundation. Members contributed 361 volunteer hours to keeping us in the black.

Communications

With a club our size, Communications is critical and big job. I want to thank Barbara Cornelius for her work on the website and willingness to train others to use it and for the creation of our Facebook page. Our website and Facebook page have become a valuable tool in today's society to stay relevant, current, and accessible. I think these efforts are paying off as we have been able to attract a few younger members this year. I had an opportunity to meet Jenny Mizutowicz, Manager of Marketing & Research for the Richardson Chamber of Commerce, who educated me about social media. So, I invited her to attend the September Program Meeting as my special guest to speak briefly to the membership about the importance of social media in today's society. It was a great topic of discussion with valuable information we have put in place – I think our club is on the right track!

I also want to thank Carolyn Swanson for her dedication to producing outstanding newsletters chocked full of informative articles and information to keep members engaged and excited about all that is happening in the community, the club, District Nine and International. Top-notch professional work, Carolyn!

This year, we created and purchased an Altrusa Richardson banner to display during Altrusa events. This banner contains the new Altrusa logo (design and layout is in compliance with Brand Guidelines and approved by the District Nine Brand Ambassador) and will be a valuable tool in receiving visibility and publicity to help Altrusa become more widely recognizable.

Also in the communication category, I want to thank all those who helped with coordinating greeters, accents, invocations, club displays, the scrapbook, dinner reservations, Chamber of Commerce updates, records retention, volunteer hours, photography, yearbook, and so much more. It truly "takes a village" and it shows with this committee reporting 735 hours of keeping us connected and informed.

Membership Recruitment

Membership Recruitment Co-Chairs Mary Beth McLemore and Bobbi Klein far exceeded expectations by initiating 12 new members this year – exceeding my goal of 8. Each initiation carried out the adventure theme and each new member was given their own Altrusa Passport. Prior to initiation, Nancy Rohm conducted a Pre-Orientation meeting to go over the basics of Altrusa history, Altrusa membership, and club expectations. Initiations were conducted quarterly to instill a sense of collectiveness among the new members. I am pleased to welcome Zora, Dean, Lynn, Irene, Laura, Caity, Samantha, Jan, Bonnie, Sherrie, Sue, and Shelley. The talents and friendships of these ladies will truly enhance our membership for years to come. I invited these members to a Presidential Brunch in their honor so we can get to know each other a little better and the event was well-received. I look forward to working on the 2013 Make A Difference Day Project with this group as we create bonds through a literacy-focused service project and a greater understand of all the Altrusa can do!

The Fall Orientation also exceeded expectations by incorporating various hands-on projects at different stations throughout Nancy Rohm's house thereby combing fun and fellowship with a lot of valuable service. This new concept was well-received by all and many committees benefitted from the extra hands-on opportunity. There was station for making holiday greeting cards for Seniors Committee, decorating denim quilt square for International Relations, homework backpacks for Education Committee, and envelope stuffing for the Ways and Means Committee in preparation for our annual fundraiser.

The Spring Orientation was an adventure as we experienced Mardi Gras – Altrusa style. Small groups constructed a Mardi Gras float from various found items but the challenge was that tape and glue were not provided. It was a great team building exercise. The results were fun and creative – Altrusans can face any challenge!

The birthday celebration in February continued the Altrusa Adventure theme with flags of all the countries with Altrusa clubs and fun presentation of the history of our club through the participation of our past presidents. Mary O even crowned as our Empress for the night. Director Linda Moore, our District Nine visitor, enjoyed the birthday celebration.

In all, members participated by donating 168 volunteer hours to this committee's activities and the Committee's budget of \$150 was wisely spent on fun activities that brought in some great new members.

Membership Retention

With 87 members and 2 Emeritus members, retention can be a challenge – but we have so much fun being with each other it actually is not all that hard - just make membership fun! Under the leadership of Gerry Carron and Deb Bourland, the Membership Retention Committee did just that – we had fun and lots of it! They did a great job this year in organizing events for our members to have fun and stay connected. The club calendar was always full of activities from Lunch Bunch to SMALLS Dinner gatherings, from Rambler Events to Altrusa Adventures, from monthly Bridge Club gatherings to the infamous.....Altrusa Wine and Chocolate Literary Society monthly book club gatherings. There is always something fun to do with your fellow Altrusans.

The Committee conducted its Annual End of Summer Pool Part and Book Swap in August at the home of Jane Merz, but since she did not have a pool, the "Pool-less Pool Party" was born, where savory pot-luck dishes were still devoured and members still shared their summer travel stories. Even without the pool, members brought and traded books for great reading in the coming year – and thus a new tradition was created since no one ever really got in the pool anyway. All remaining books were donated to the Richardson Friends of Library for their annual books sale.

The December holiday celebration, entitled "Altrusa Holiday Adventure and International Passport Celebration", focused on my theme "Discover Altrusa: Your Passport to Adventure!" with unique entertainment provided by the international dance group and drummers, Yallah! Dance Co.

but it also included traditional holiday sing-a-long of carols led by song leaders Mary and Frances Ostentowski. It was a memorable evening!

The Altrusa Marketplace, under the leadership of Ginger Tonne, was taken to new level this year with nearly 30 vendors participating in this craft show that raised \$440 from vendor sales and \$532 from the bake sale for the Altrusa Sisters Fund.

In all, members participated by donating 366 volunteer hours to this committee's activities and the Committee's budget of \$250 (along with lots of in-kind donations) was used on events and activities that kept members having fun.

Ways and Means Fundraiser – Annual Awards Luncheon

And we cannot forget our signature event – Outstanding Women of Today... Builders of Tomorrow Annual Awards Luncheon. Each year we continue to get better. This year, under the leadership of Brenda Boston and Cindy McIntyre and host of other sub-committee co-chairs, we honored 36 truly outstanding women and hosted over 300 attendees at a fundraiser luncheon fully supported by the community. Altrusa presented Richardson Mayor Bob Townsend with a “big check” in the amount of \$207,202.87 for the value of volunteer hours given to community projects by Richardson Altrusans in 2011-2012. Thank you for donating 1,820 hours to making this year another huge success and congratulations on raising over \$15,500 to fund our projects next year.

Altrusans, please prepare for landing!

As you can see, we are a busy club. In all, a total of 4,297 hours of community service was reported, 3,792 hours of member service hours was reported, and an amazing 8,635 hours dedicated to other service in the community, for a cumulative total of 16,724 hours of service. That is amazing! Busy clubs take strong leadership, oversight, and coordination on all levels and I think we have achieved that.

While I could have given you a “Reader’s Digest” version of this report, it would not have done justice for everything this club has accomplished. It would not have done justice to the amazing adventure that we just completed - all of which was made possible by You. We are an amazing club. We are a dynamic club. We are one of the strongest clubs in District Nine – and quite possibly in all of Altrusa International – and I am proud of each and every one of you.

I want to thank my Board for their unending support of me and the entire membership this past year. You stepped up when called upon, and I thank you. Our goals of serving, exploring, participating, and sharing were all achieved – and even over-achieved in some cases. I stand before you proud of the amazing opportunity to have served as your president this past year.

Thank you all for your friendship, your support, your shoulder to cry on, your ear to bend, your loyalty, your enthusiasm, but most of all - your passion! Your passion to serve your community. Your passion to be a good friend. THAT is what sets us apart from other organizations. I encourage each of you to continue to Discover Altrusa! and thank you for taking this adventure with me.