

KAN: Kindness Action Ninjas

Nomination for Mamie L. Bass Service Award

May 25, 2016

**Altrusa International of Richardson, Inc.
PO Box 832101
Richardson, TX 75083-2101
USA**

District Nine



MAMIE L. BASS SERVICE AWARD ENTRY FORM

Please type. (If you need additional room, please add separate sheets of paper to the Entry Form.)

District: Nine

Name of Altrusa Club: Richardson

Address: PO Box 832101

City: Richardson State/Province: TX

Country: USA Zip/Postal Code: 75083

Contact Person: Cindy McIntyre

Telephone: 469-556-6082 E-mail: contact@altrusa.com

Date (day, month, year): 25-5 -2016

Club Membership (as of entry date): 80

Project Title: KAN (Kindness Action Ninjas)

Project Description:

The narrative must not exceed 1,000 words, must be typed, double-spaced, and on plain white paper or background. In developing the narrative, Clubs should refer to the judging criteria and score sheet. Please refer to the section entitled, "Entries," #4 for questions that should be addressed in the narrative to assist judges in evaluating your submission.

View the Submission Contact List to submit your completed entry to the designated Awards Chair of your District.

The winning entries at the District Conferences must reach the International Office by June 1st to be considered in the International competition.

Selection of the Project:

The objective of the **KAN Project** (Kindness Action Ninjas) was to spread kindness throughout the city of Richardson. Our expectation was to encourage as many club members, individuals and other groups in the community to do random acts of kindness [pay it forward] for two days in April. We asked participants to report their results and send photographs for us to share. Research has shown if we change and reward “good” behavior, we can alter negative attitudes.

Altrusa International of Richardson, Inc. was inspired by Brian Williams’ presentation of his *Think Kindness Foundation* and the work he is doing rewarding kindness in schools across the country. Brian is fighting bullying in elementary age children by having them journal acts of kindness for competitive awards. One result following this program was that we installed “Choose Kind” libraries in four local schools encouraging understanding of anyone who is different or has a disability.

We initiated a pilot program of our KAN project at the Altrusa District Nine Conference in 2015. Club members came home buzzing about the impact of our black ninja t-shirts, and “you’ve been touched by a kindness ninja” cards passed out to attendees who were observed spreading kindness to others.

At the Altrusa International Convention in Kansas City 2015, I attended a leadership workshop conducted by former Governor Beth Blair. Her message was to go BIG. She said, “Think big and then go even BIGGER!” That truly resonated with me. I presented the idea of a Kindness weekend to our Board of Directors, which was received with great enthusiasm. I asked board Directors to spearhead the project. Club members were enthusiastic and eager to participate in the project.

Development and Implementation of the Project:

Work started right away because this project was large in scope. Members were invited to be part of our steering committee choosing April 2nd-3rd for the project date. Planning meetings were held in which we decided on the name, **KAN** (Kindness Action Ninjas). We felt the ninja concept would appeal to young and old alike and sounded fun. We brainstormed at several meetings and then divided key responsibilities. Some members concentrated on involving the city government and others on non-profit partners to enlist their support. Other members worked on correspondence, publicity, created save the date cards, and participation stickers. Several members distributed coasters to local businesses and restaurants. To foster enthusiasm and group spirit for the weekend, we ordered special *Richardson Kindness Ninja* t-shirts from a local manufacturer.

One of our most difficult decisions was identifying the platform for launching the project so people could sign up easily, tell us their group's name, and the kindness they were planning. We wanted them to share their stories and photos with us. We chose *Facebook* to host our event. As one news source reported:

Altrusa Richardson is encouraging groups and individuals to sign up on its Facebook page and then make a concerted effort to be a "Kindness Ninja" April 2-3. They are encouraging people to pay it forward, to do something nice for a friend, family member or a complete stranger. Participants are asked to report back on what happened during the Weekend of Kindness, with photos if possible. Residents also may participate by donating to one of Altrusa's Partner Charities. To sign up, go to www.facebook.com/AltrusaRichardsonTexas.

A grant of \$880 from Altrusa International gave us the needed financial support. We used these funds to get the word out to the community. Drink coasters were one clever and economical way to do this. The colorful, useful coasters had information about the **KAN** weekend on one side and information about our Altrusa Club on the other. Also purchased were Ninja stickers that we used on the platters of

cookies, on literature and letters about the event, and on the donations to area women's shelters to keep our theme consistent.

But the best resource was our city government. The Richardson City Manager's office, the City Council, and Communication teams were key organizations helpful to our project. The Richardson Rotary and Richardson Host Lions Club also supported us. Club members helped distribute drink coasters, participation letters, and a list of possible kind acts to individuals and interested community groups. Members baked hundreds of cookies, sewed pillowcases, and collected or purchased pajamas and socks for distribution.

We kicked off the project the morning of April 2nd at our favorite meeting spot, **Friends Place Day Care**, to put finishing touches on all the items before they were presented to Hopes Door and New Beginning Center, organizations providing family crisis intervention services. The cookies were delivered to the fire and police personnel across the city with shifts running all weekend and into Monday. The air was electric and the energy palpable. It was awesome!

Evaluation of the Project:

Our objectives for the project were achieved. Over 400 women and children at Hope's Door and New Beginning Center were served by this project. Each of the Richardson 140 fire fighters and 130 police officers received cookies and a big "thank you" during the **KAN** weekend. Countless other people in our community were affected by our **KAN** weekend, more than we will ever know. Our articles in the newspapers, visits with the City Council, coordination with other non-profits, and spreading the excitement by club members certainly promoted citywide awareness. We wore our **KAN** t-shirts everywhere! Many people said "what a

wonderful idea,” and planned to share acts of kindness with others. Stories and photos following the event were touching. One example was a woman, and all 10 of her grandchildren, who brought a cake to the paramedics who saved her husband’s life. And one hundred signatures graced the giant “Thank You’ poster for the police liaison prepared at our Senior Center. The families, friends, and neighbors of many others had a brighter, ‘kinder’ weekend thanks to **KAN**. The Golden Rule is alive and well in Richardson, Texas!

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy McIntyre, President

Altrusa International of Richardson, Inc.

2015-2016

Synopsis

The **KAN** (Kindness Action Ninja) project partnered with the city and non-profit organizations to touch as many people as possible in our community doing acts of kindness for others thus benefitting both the giver and recipient. Involving our entire city engaged our citizenry, promoted awareness of our Altrusa Club and built a wonderful camaraderie within our group. Win! Win!