

**President's Annual Report**  
**Altrusa International of Richardson, Inc.**  
**2015-2016**

I'm delighted to present my President's report this evening. It has been my distinct honor and privilege to serve the Richardson club and the mission and goals of Altrusa International for 2015-2016. It is such a cliché but the time has really flown by. That seems to be happening more and more of late. We have had a good year. Considering the amount of change we made, it was a great year! You the members, as Governor Zamora pointed out, are key. You have worked tirelessly on our many projects and our large fundraiser. You have attended meetings with positive, 'can do' attitudes, and made facilitation a joy. You did what was asked of you and so much more. I thank you from the bottom of my heart, but as I've said, "Where you are concerned, my heart has no bottom!"

When I was installed, the goals I set were three fold: to serve our community, to grow our membership, and to heighten awareness of our club in the community while fostering greater unity under my theme "*Altrusa Reigns: Community Gains.*" Here's a review of our accomplishments.

Goal #1: To Serve our Community

Service is the main reason most of us joined Altrusa. And with the many opportunities to serve in the U.S. and abroad, we made a big impact. It was my intention to bring the club together by working for a common goal. Every project culminated during the *Kindness Action Ninja* (KAN) weekend in the spring (more about that later).

**Ability House**, a group home for adults with disabilities, continued to be served this year with birthday celebrations and decorations for Christmas thanks to co-chairs Jane Merz and Mimi Tanner. Parties included cards, cake and gifts. One resident brings his birthday card out for us to admire every time we come until it is replaced with a new one. With limited motor ability (many are confined to wheel chairs), these gentle, loving people are not able to participate in many activities outside the home. They depend on Altrusa; look forward to our visits, consider us as family, and we did not disappoint. Their own families are most grateful for our support. Although there are only a few residents, our impact is significant. Our mission of service requires dedication, humility, and love for those with serious disabilities. Our club serves them well.

The **Seniors Committee** continued to keep our most valuable citizens entertained with Bingo, and Auctions at several retirement facilities. Book Movers, rotating books between senior living centers also continued with the help of the Richardson Men's Exchange Club. Thanks to chair Gloria Sandoval for making sure this important group stayed active.

**Community Outreach Committee**, co-chaired by Donna Buhr and Kay George, was very, very busy this year. It's our largest service committee, encompassing a variety of projects and events, and our group embraces it warmly. The committee followed the service committee guidelines as directed by Altrusa International and impacted as many people as possible while promoting Altrusa. They identified community needs and fulfilled them. Existing projects continued for the **Network of Community Ministries** food pantry, plus **New Beginning Center** and **Hope's Door Shelter** dedicated to ending family violence. New projects were added to meet the needs for the **Children's Advocacy Center of Collin County**, the **Methodist Richardson Hospital NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit)**, and the **Boys and Girls Clubs of America**. With a budget of \$2,500.00, they managed 20 events with many months having 2 or more events. Two new events this year warrant further description. **The Children's Advocacy Center** provides support for children victimized by abuse. At the *Back to School Fair*, 6 of our volunteers served 800 persons. Requested items were children's underwear, socks, pajamas, winter coats, and toys. Altrusans provided fifteen winter coats, underwear and socks for 36 children, while our *Holiday Project* volunteers helped organize and arrange 800 categories of toys for Christmas delivery.

Another new project involved making and donating colorful, soft blankets at a *NICU Birthday Party* for one-year old babies who had been born prematurely. The hospital staff was delighted and asked us to make it an annual event. Half of our club members participated and 25 babies and their parents were served.

I made an effort to honor one committee each month by having them give an update of their activities at a business meeting and they received special recognition at a dinner meeting.

I took a slightly different direction with Community Outreach. I believed new members and guests would benefit from a workshop at our dinner meeting in January. By seeing the group working for others, they could catch the wave of enthusiasm and joy we receive in our service work. The committee told about their projects, made special centerpieces, and facilitated a hands-on project consisting of writing notes to accompany our hand made pillowcases that were delivered to **Hope's Door Shelter** as part of our *Kindness Action Ninja* initiative. Also they collected over 200 pounds of food and \$77.00 for fresh milk for Network food pantry clients. Our participation was 100% and over 100 persons served.

Basic toiletries were sorely lacking at the **New Beginning Center** where women can arrive with no personal items at all. Community Outreach has an ongoing project to collect such items as travel sized soap, toothpaste, shampoo and lotions, etc. for this shelter. In addition, as part of our unity initiative, they worked together with the International Relations Committee to pack more of these items into "Hygiene Kits" for families in Guatemala. In all, 95% of Altrusa Richardson participated to serve an estimated 250 persons.

I have not described all the projects completed by this great committee's dedicated and enthusiastic members. But you can see why my heart swells with their enormous achievements.

**Education Committee**, co-chaired by Elizabeth Smith DuBose and Mary Osentowski, was fairly small but large in impact. Our adopted Richardson elementary

school, Terrace, was the recipient of our efforts. A fall trip to the eye-popping Perot Museum found 4<sup>th</sup> grade children racing ‘Tyrannosaurus Rex’ dinosaurs and examining cheek cells under a microscope, among other exciting adventures. Altrusa furnished the bus taking the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade choir students to sing at a nursing home. Students who attended the Pre-K class *Manners Party* were rewarded for polite behavior by getting a book to share and one to give as a gift. The Pre-K children and their families also received free tickets and parking passes from the Eisemann Center so they could attend children’s theater productions thanks to Altrusan Sarah Nesbit. This year *Teddy Bear Time* moved from serving Pre-K to serving Kindergarten students at Terrace. The wonderful curriculum, designed and supported by the Richardson Adult Literacy Program, combined enrichment, craft, reading practice, and family involvement – all very important to this culturally diverse school population. Parents who read to their children mold children who love reading and surpass non-readers.

Two other projects valuable to this age child were the *Backpack Program* and the *Summer Reading Program*. The backpacks (13) we supplied could be checked out for the weekend on Friday and included enrichment exercises, books for enjoyment, and snacks. When the packs came back on Monday, they needed to be checked to replace any missing items. That function in itself required over 100 volunteer hours. Altrusa funds also provided books for summer reading. Studies have shown that lower socioeconomic level students lose ground over the summer months unlike their counterparts in the upper levels who continue growing with summer camps and vacation trips to keep them engaged. The Education Committee is dedicated to promoting literacy in this school community that is desperately in need.

**International Relations Committee** had a very successful year, too. It is challenging to provide more than monetary support to international projects. However, our award winning committee, under the leadership of co-chairs Jane Tucker and Rose Daughety, continued to find more ways to help abroad.

Our first program of the year brought Michelle Hollaender from Helps International to speak about conditions in Guatemala and a new “*Women Empowering Women*” program. This program brings volunteer women from the U.S. to teach mothers in Guatemala how to improve their lives. Safe stoves are installed to prevent children from being burned in open cooking pits, and water filters are provided allowing water to be drinkable. In April we sent a donation of \$250.00 for the purchase of both an ONIL stove and a water filter. To date 980,000 people have a safer environment thanks to HELPS Int’l. Michelle’s presentation was so powerful that many Richardson Altrusans have decided to help in Guatemala. We delivered 50 Hygiene Kits to the program in February, and are working on plans to install a *Choose Kind Library* in Santa Aveline, Guatemala with the help of our \$250.00 donation. This is our second *Choose Kind Library* – the first was donated to TeachHaiti last year. A third library will be placed in Audelia Creek Elementary before the school year comes to a close. Also we sent \$378.00 for this year’s schooling of Senayda Isabel Torres Medina – our Guatemalan foreign student.

Two military projects generated 113 cards to deployed troops. Members wrote the cards prior to a business meeting. Our group of cards was the last sent before changes in deployment forced *Operation Write Home* to close down. The other project was closer to

home, providing floral arrangements for lunch/dinner tables at *Fischer House*. Families of Veterans Administration hospital patients live there while their loved one is being treated. The arrangements lift the spirits of the residents with the change of the seasons.

Other projects were inspired by United Nations Days. Our second annual *World Peace Art Contest* was held in conjunction with the Richardson ISD and the Civic Art Society. Fourteen Richardson elementary schools submitted art reflecting the theme "*Youth For Peace*." Approximately 1,500 students were involved with each school submitting 3 art works for final judging. School and civic leaders raved about this project. Plans are underway for next year's event! We enjoyed wearing orange in support of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and sold **BeadforLife** jewelry in honor of International Women's Day to support women in Uganda becoming self-sufficient. In all, this committee's awards are well deserved. Their projects have enough hands-on work to satisfy our club's service needs while contributing generously to others urgently needing funds across the globe.

The working budget for International Relations committee for the year was \$1750.00. When the books close they will have spent \$1740.49 making our world better.

In the past few years, our Outstanding Women of Today Luncheon has generated enough income for us to provide scholarships to graduating seniors in Richardson, and grants to other non-profits in the community.

**The Scholarship Committee**, co-chaired by Brenda Boston and Jan Flesch, reviewed over 89 applicants and awarded 4 star students with \$2,000.00 each to use for tuition and books. Members of this hardworking committee spent approximately 200 hours collectively reading the applications, interviewing, and selecting the best students. The award-winning students provide the program for our April dinner meeting by telling us about their incredible paths to success. These scholarships are our investment in the future. Education is key and we hope when they become adults, they too will give back to their community whether through Altrusa or other worthy organizations.

Our Altrusa **Grant Committee** accepts applications for outside community projects in June. Only non-profit organizations can apply and they must outline a specific project for which the monies will be used. They must account for the spending in a timely fashion or they are prevented from applying the following year. Giving monies to other, often much larger, organizations, allows them to serve more people than Altrusa possibly could alone. This year \$7,000.00 was allocated to 9 projects in Richardson. *Richardson Reads One Book*, **The Warren Center- Bridge Program**, **Network – Women's Financial Empowerment Series**, and others were grateful recipients of our grant monies. Thanks to co-chairs Liz Luthans and Barbara Berthold for an outstanding job. I wish we had more to give to worthy recipients.

In summary, I think our club provided local and international service quite admirably!

## Goal #2: To Foster Membership Growth

My second goal was to grow the club by four new members. I am happy to report my goal was exceeded. At this writing, 14 new members have been initiated, or will be initiated at the June business meeting. The **Recruitment** and the **Retention Committees**, under the direction of co-chairs Mary Beth McLemore and Gloria Sandoval, planned entertaining, engaging events for Christmas and our Club Birthday to show our fun side. I am indebted to them for a super year with great results. I worked very closely with the **Strategic Planning Committee** under co-chairs Kay Hopper and Nancy Crowe as well. We were able to outline new goals with accompanying action plans – a direct way to fulfill those goals. The President-Elect is excited to have this direction as a starting point in building membership.

## Goal #3: To Heighten Awareness in the Community and Unify Our Membership

With a change to separate into two Boards – Club and Foundation –we had a pressing need to bring both groups together, to reduce any concerns that had surfaced, and to work together going forward. A liaison was chosen to represent the club board at trustee meetings. This ensured club interests were being heard at Foundation Board meetings. The Chair of the Trustees Board and I decided to attend each other's meetings. These changes helped quell all general concerns so our work could continue. The creation and division of these two entities was implemented successfully insuring we will be in compliance with all rules and regulations governing 501c3 organizations.

Another way to enhance awareness and educate our members came through our **Leadership Committee**. Co-chairs Liz Luthans and Sarah Nesbit planned and executed two events for the year. In the fall, they presented an interactive program, *Committee Leadership Bingo*. It was educational, fun, and timely. In the spring, a communications strategist, Stacy Hollowell, was the speaker at a lovely luncheon for members of the Altrusa clubs in our area. Her topic was *Three Rules of Effective Communication*.

All of our **Administrative Committees** pitched in to make this a unified year and make our presence known. Special thanks goes to Kim Kierce who kept our communication team going when the co-chair became ill. I was very proud of the **Programs** we presented at the dinner meeting. Many thanks to Sue McElveen. And of course the **Finance Committee** under Deb Bourland and Laura Trainor-Collins made sure our budgets were in super shape to start the year.

But my best move to heighten awareness in the community and foster greater unity within our club came from initiating a capstone project involving members across the entire year to benefit the entire City of Richardson. My concern was that some members concentrated too heavily on one area. In a large club, it's often hard to get to know one other. I hoped if all committees joined forces to undertake a yearlong task, it would be an opportunity for our members to bond together. The *Kindness Action Ninjas (KAN) Project* was born out of this concern. It necessitated lots of planning in advance of the chosen weekend, but the actual execution was easy. A random act of kindness was something everyone could do no matter his or her age, gender, ethnicity, or location. Doing something

nice for someone else could help a friend, family member, or even a complete stranger. Our target dates were April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>.

We wanted all participants to post about their kind acts on our Facebook Event page. This platform provided everything we needed in one place. Interested people could sign up, “like” the event, and post stories and photos when it was over. We tried to use the social media tips I learned at the Altrusa International Convention in Kansas City. Planning took many months. Our club has four directors on the board who serve the president as needed, so I asked them to take on *KAN*. The directors invited all members from the club to help. A grant was submitted and funded by Altrusa International. Needing the help and support of a big organization with lots of clout, we met with the Richardson Assistant City Manager. She was very excited and helped us with date selection to coincide with April Volunteer Month. She guided us to others in city hall who provided help with contact names for other non-profits, the editor of the citywide news magazine, and the City Council. We received support from other non-profit organizations, publicity from the *Richardson Today* magazine, and a Proclamation to be read at a City Council session. I think this is Altrusa’s first City Proclamation making April 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Kindness Weekend in the City of Richardson. Thirty members were on hand to hear the proclamation!

As part of our planning, Barbara Cornelius designed a coaster with *KAN* information on one side and club contact information on the other. Drink coasters were distributed by local restaurant staff and retailers to help us “save the date.” Participation letters were written to all non-profits inviting them to join us. Everyone we contacted felt *KAN* was a wonderful idea!

For our contribution, the club decided to bake and deliver cookies to all shifts of both Fire and Police personnel in the city. Meetings were held with Police and Fire Chiefs so we could make deliveries without disrupting shifts. Armies of bakers, under the direction of Janie Jaquier, produced mountains of cookies. Platters, ribbon, and ninja stickers completed the look. A large kickoff reception was planned for early Saturday morning. The City Council was invited as well. The **Retention Committee** was asked to provide food. The **Recruitment Committee** was charged with inviting guests to come for “*Add an Altrusan*” month. Everything was ready.

When April 2<sup>nd</sup> dawned bright, sunny, and warm, I felt a swell of pride in what was to come. The whole club came to the kickoff reception. Breakfast was provided for participants and guests. Cookies were packaged with ribbon and stickers. Ribbons went on the pillowcases, pajamas, and socks we made or purchased throughout the year. Everyone was working and laughing. **It was awesome!** Then the pillowcases, pajamas, and socks were presented to representatives of **Hopes Door Shelter** and **New Beginning Center**. You could feel the energy and excitement as it flowed around the room. Those who delivered cookies throughout the weekend kept the fun going. We have great stories and pictures to show. We had raised awareness of the club throughout the community and had become a stronger club in the process.

I learned in a Leadership Seminar to go big. When you think you have it big enough, go even bigger. I offer my thanks to former Governor Beth Blair for the encouragement. The logistics were pretty formidable but we gave it a shot. I believe a project of this magnitude will need a couple more years to be set permanently into the fabric of the city, and our incoming president is committed to its continuance!

In conclusion, we have reached our goals in membership, service, exposure in the community, and club unity. We are a cohesive working unit with plans to move ahead for another successful year. Thank you all for your love and your support, and thanks for trying new things. Each one of you is very special to me, and I appreciate every effort you put forth this year for our wonderful club. I know Altrusa “reigned and the community gained!”

Cindy McIntyre  
Altrusa International of Richardson, Inc.  
2015-2016