

Kindness Is A Universal Language

Nomination for Letha H. Brown Literacy Award

June 20, 2018

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

District Nine

2017-2018

Letha H. Brown Literacy Award Entry Form

District: **Nine**
Name of Club: **Altrusa International of Richardson, Inc.**
Address: **PO Box 832101**
City: **Richardson** State: **TX**
Country: **USA** Zip/Postal Code: **75083-2101**
Name of Contact Person: **Sue McElveen, 2017-2018 Club President**
Phone: **214-803-4602** Email: **suemcelveen@yahoo.com**
Date of Entry **June 20, 2018**
Membership **95 Regular Members plus 1 Emeritus Member**

Kindness Is A Universal Language

Choose Kind Libraries is an ongoing project, partnering with *Richardson Independent School District, Helps International, TeachHaiti, and Think Kindness*. The project:

1. promotes values of inclusion, kindness, acceptance, anti-bullying, citizenship and respect for cultural, racial, physical and developmental diversity through literacy
2. assists lower economic level elementary schools that do not have strong parental or community support
3. promotes recognition of Altrusa International within our community and internationally

Our long-term goal is to start one new library a year, which Altrusa far exceeded in 2017-2018! This project continued this year, by creating libraries at two RISD schools: **Spring**

Valley Elementary; Forestridge Elementary; and one internationally, at Tumaini Children's Home/Orphanage in Nyeri, Kenya.

To date, Altrusa Richardson has established ten Choose Kind Libraries. Each library is a section within the school's library designated by a sign reading "A Special Project of The Altrusa International of Richardson Foundation". Altrusans place bookplates with this message inside books. Ribbon Cutting events promote the special library to students, teachers, and parents. Each Choose Kind library costs \$600 - \$700, which includes 30-45 books, signage, bookplates, and supplemental items. Each library takes 3-6 months, 35-40 volunteer hours and 10% participation of club members to establish. Email was primarily used to communicate and coordinate with schools, RISD administration, suppliers and international organizations.

Six RISD Choose Kind Libraries

Our first four libraries were established at **Terrace Elementary, Northrich Elementary, Northlake Elementary** in 2015 and **Audelia Creek Elementary**, in 2016. In 2017-2018, our fifth and sixth Choose Kind Libraries were created at **Forestridge Elementary** and **Spring Valley Elementary**. Schools were contacted in the fall. In February, each school librarian submitted a list of requested books, and Altrusa placed the orders to be invoiced directly. In April, both collections were processed through *RISD*, delivered to the schools and Altrusans added the bookplates.

Both libraries opened in May. **Forestridge Elementary** opened on May 11th, in conjunction with the school's "Muffins With Mom" event. The Assistant Principal officially "cut the ribbon" and shared with parents and teachers the important addition it is to their

school's library. The librarian expressed the school's gratitude to Altrusa. Altrusans talked individually to the parents about the Choose Kind Libraries, their purpose, and shared information about Altrusa.

At the **Spring Valley Elementary** opening, Altrusans presented the sign to the Assistant Principal, Librarian, and teachers at a staff meeting on May 24th. The Assistant Principal introduced the collection to the staff, noted how it enhanced the school's mission to promote these values among the students and expressed gratitude on behalf of the school for Altrusa's valuable contribution. The Librarian praised the importance of the collection for the future.

Also in May, RISD Northlake Elementary received \$100 to enhance their collection.

International Choose Kind Libraries

Our first two international libraries were established at "The School of Hope" in **Port-au-Prince** and **St Michel, Haiti** in 2015 and 2016, respectively, through our work with *TeachHaiti*. The third library was established in 2017 at the William Botan school in **Santa Avelina, Guatemala**, working with *HELPS International*.

In 2017-2018, our fourth library was established in **Tumani Children's Home, Nyeri, Kenya** through our work with *Think Kindness*. Founder Brian Williams spoke at a February meeting about the mission of his organization to inspire measurable acts of kindness in schools and communities throughout the world. Brian encourages shoe collections and delivers hundreds of pairs to orphanages twice a year. In response, Altrusa collected 200 pairs of shoes to benefit Brian's mission this spring.

Brian brought with him, Grace Wangui, an orphan he met in 2009 at the **Tumani Home**, who is grown and now a college student in Kenya. Grace embodies what a simple

act of kindness (i.e. the gift of shoes) can do to change a life. That evening, impressed by our Choose Kind Library project, Brian Williams offered to donate the profits of his Kindness Ninja books (sold by our club) to fund a new Choose Kind Library. We immediately chose Grace's orphanage as the perfect location. The profits from our sale of one hundred (100) books assisted funding the **Tumani** library.

Our Northlake Choose Kind librarian, based on feedback from her students, selected the books for Kenya, which Altrusa ordered in April. The students made greeting cards and bookmarks for the orphans. A *Think Kindness* mission trip delivered the Choose Kind Library books along with our collection of shoes, in June. Grace will deliver the Choose Kind Library sign, bookplates, cards, and bookmarks in August, when she returns to Kenya.

Support of pre-established Choose Kind Libraries continued this year, too. In 2018, TeachHaiti received \$400 to rebuild/restock both Haiti's schools' libraries due to damage from hurricanes that devastated Haiti in October 2016 and February 2017.

Funding

In 2017-2018, the projects were funded by the Altrusa Richardson Foundation, sales of Brian William's book, and a \$2,000 Altrusa International Foundation grant received in 2017, which was designated to this project.

Evaluation

This is a hugely impactful project. Since the newest RISD libraries are so new, we do not currently have stats on those schools. However, librarians at other schools confirm 70-75% of the books are regularly checked out and many books waitlisted. **Forestridge** and **Spring Valley Elementary** together have 2,000 students. If only 50% of them read

one book, 1,000 students are directly impacted. Teachers and administrators from the libraries report a noticeable change in the culture of their schools, effecting every student and teacher; approximately 2,400 people. Students adopt the values in these books, affecting their homelife. These changes ultimately impact our entire community.

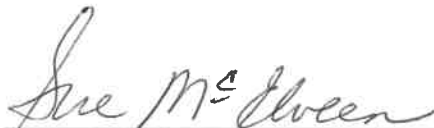
The **Tumaini Children's Home** library benefits 60+ orphans. Internationally, our libraries now benefit over 400 students, their families, and communities.

Our contributions have been recognized in the RISD Newsletter (distributed to 28,000 RISD families weekly). Library signs and bookplates promote Altrusa daily. The RISD School Board recognizes Altrusa's contribution to education. Altrusa is recognized as an "Excellence in Education" award winner.

Synopsis

This project supports literacy worldwide with a collection of books centered on teaching kindness, acceptance, and respect for developmental, physical, racial, and cultural diversity and supports the education of students locally and internationally.

Respectfully Submitted,



Sue McElveen, 2017-2018 President

PLEASE NOTE:

Optional Supplemental Material (No points) Judges place primary importance on the written narrative. Substantiating materials do not earn points and are considered only in a supplementary perspective.

ENTRY SUBMISSION:

Please submit one (1) original and three (3) copies of this nomination postmarked on or before **June 30th**

to:

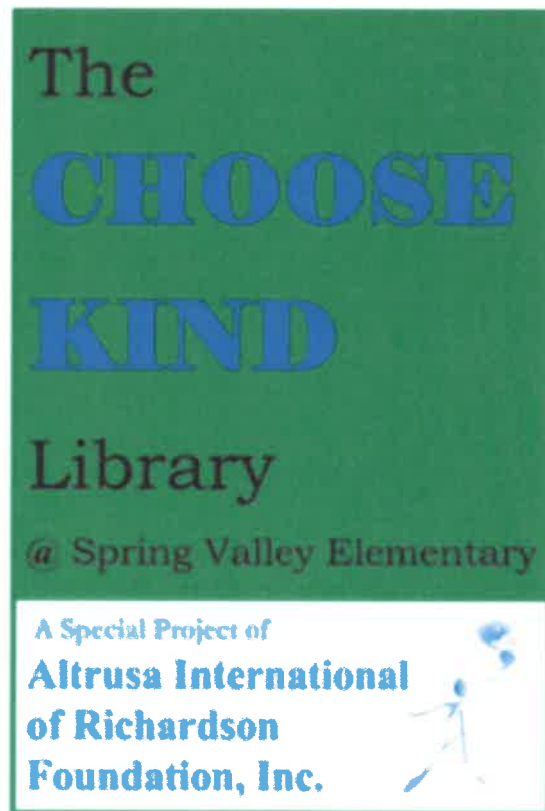
Letha H. Brown/Governor's Literacy Award Coordinator

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Richardson ISD Choose Kind Libraries
Spring Valley - 2018



Richardson ISD Choose Kind Libraries
Forestridge - 2018



International Choose Kind Libraries
Tumaini Children's Home, Kenya - 2018