

Kindness Ninjas Go Global

**Nomination for
Dr Nina Fay Calhoun International Relations Award**

Date: June 10, 2019

**Altrusa International of Richardson, Inc.
PO Box 833171, Richardson,
Texas, 75083
USA**

District Nine



**DR NINA FAY CALHOUN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS 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 833171

City: Richardson **State/Province:** TX

Country: U.S.A. **Zip/Postal Code:** 75083-3171

Contact Person: Cindy McIntyre

Telephone: 469-556-6082 **E-mail:** cindy.mcintyre@att.net **Date**

(day, month, year): June 10, 2019

Club Membership (as of entry date): 91

Project Title: The Kindness Ninjas Go Global

Project Description:
See attached.

Synopsis

How do you help your community and your world? How do you honor those who sacrifice everything for freedom and those who need our help? Combining two projects, care packages for 160 deployed troops and 200 Sustainable Product kits for African women, brought the International focus with The Kindness Ninjas Go Global Project making a huge impact on kindness.

The Kindness Ninjas Go Global Project was based on input from a new member who wanted to do a project for our troops. So, the idea of boxed care packages containing snacks, useful items, books, and toys to share with children overseas was born. Unfortunately, she passed away before it could be implemented. To honor our member and to honor our troops, we began collecting nonperishable items - batteries, note paper, pens, comic pages, playing cards, toiletries, etc. Members were given extensive lists of preferred items to choose from— each member contributing as she wished according to her own means. Also, during this time, we did our research. Originally, we wanted to give packages to family members here in the US, have them add something personal, and mail to their loved one. We wanted a personal connection with the service men and women receiving an individual box from our kindness ninjas to let them know they were appreciated. Being touched by a Kindness Ninja would help our service members be good ambassadors in foreign lands, allowing them to build positive relations with the local children. As Publilius Syrus said, “You can accomplish by kindness what you cannot by force.”

But for security reasons, information about military families is not released. After many fruitless phone calls, we connected with a wonderful Chaplain (Lieutenant Commander Randal Potter) at the Joint Naval Air Station in Ft. Worth. He promised us the names and addresses of deployed chaplains who would gladly distribute our boxes to neglected personnel in their unit! So, we were on our way.

But more funds were needed to cover shipping costs. Sending 10 big boxes with 16 smaller packages inside was going to cost \$2000! Receiving a generous Altrusa

International Grant for \$1500 was wonderful. This award built our confidence and allowed us to move forward although still far short of our shipping cost. Several events, both internal and external, helped us meet this challenge. Internally, our club made the Kindness Project a permanent project with its own budget by combining it with our International Relations Committee – apropos, since helping others around the world is the highest act of kindness. Externally, as word spread, our effort caught fire in the community. Steven Fischer and Tony Cashiola (executives of *Accumed*) were taken with our idea making a generous donation of \$500. Item donations came in from *Richardson Dentistry*; *Penzey's Spice Company* gave us 2000 flavor packets. Jane Tucker took the project to her Sunday School class and to Friend's Place Adult Day Services; both generously donated items and money. The City of Richardson included an article in the citywide *Richardson Today* monthly newsletter and mentioned the event on the Week In Review website. Children from our Choose Kind Elementary school libraries wrote individual notes of thanks which combined with our club message of support topped off each box. With this wonderful community support, we were able to add supplemental items including sample sized antibacterial and cortisone ointments, warm socks as well as extra yummy snacks. Thirteen members baked 4 or more dozen homemade cookies each and packaged them in their own little container with a Ninja Sticker on the top! Doing something nice for our military hardly compensates for their sacrifice, but we know the packages we sent were needed and appreciated.

Our packing and mailing date was April 6, 2019. We were ready! Stations were set up to tape the package boxes together while an assembly line controlled how many of each item went in each individual box. Organization and efficiency left our members feeling

their time was well spent. What a fun morning. We finished 160 full care packages in less than two hours!

The extra time proved helpful! In addition to the Military Care packages, another team of Altrusans assembled and packed 200 kits for the Days for Girls organization.

Members of other area clubs (Garland, Frisco and Collin County) turned out to help too.

As an Altrusa International Service Project, we committed to a partnership through 2021 with Days for Girls. The motto of helping "Every Girl. Everywhere. Period!" really resonated with our Kindness Ninjas Go Global theme. This group sends sustainable menstrual kits to girls around the world enabling them to be at school every day of the year. Our Richardson Altrusa club alone donated 336 wash cloths, 650-gallon freezer bags, 150 soaps, and 60 pairs of panties. Cash donations and sales of Popsocket cell phone knobs yielded \$540. Sewing, threading ties, and attaching snaps were necessary before these personal items could be bagged. Joining with our district nine clubs, hundreds of kits were assembled for Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, Zambia, Malawi and Haiti. This project is definitely a labor of love. Organizationally, Altrusa International has given 234,000,000 days of school or work back to women and girls all over the world by resolving a way to handle their periods. Now that's kindness!

So how do we evaluate the work of our Kindness Ninjas? We know the teachers and students at the Choose Kind libraries loved participating. Companies and private citizens partnered with us to help the troops and the plight of young women world-wide. More than 50 of our members attended the work sessions. Every member donated items or baked cookies. Other clubs joined us fostering community spirit for a

project that resonated with all. We are not likely to hear back from Days for Girls recipients, but we hope to hear stories from our service men and women. The ripple effect spreading from our actions should impact many families. Kindness Ninjas Go Global was a super success for our club and our world.

“Dear Service men and woman. Thank you so much for protecting us. We are so very thankful that you are risking your lifes so we can live and eat. ... Sacrificing your time with your family. Thank you for keeping us free so I can do gymnastics.”

Bonnie B. (age 9)



