

Conference Awards Luncheon Report **Richardson Altrusa Award Winners!**

By Nancy Rohm, 2016-2017 President

One of my favorite events at the Annual Altrusa District Nine Conference is the Awards Luncheon. Every club that enters completes a report for each entry submitted following specific guidelines. The judges, who are not Altrusans, are asked to do the difficult task of selecting three “winners” in each award category. There are different judges for each award category; and there are new judges each year. All the entries are likely worthy of winning.

Some years, Altrusa Richardson has won a few awards, once in a while, we didn’t win any awards, and other years we came away as BIG WINNERS. This was one of those special years! The awards that were given out at the 2018 Conference were submitted in late June, 2017, highlighting projects from the 2016-2017 year. All of the Richardson submissions are on our web site under Club Awards/Reports.

The **Communications Award** criteria is very rigorous and detailed. **Kimberly Kierce**, Chair of the 2016-2017 Communications Committee, prepared the submission for Richardson Altrusa. With Kim’s dedication to accuracy, she assembled three identical three-ring binders with a table of contents, a report, and tabbed dividers, making it easy to locate the sample inclusions. Among the items she included were copies of Tidings, samples from our Web Page, samples from our emails, photos of “big check” presentations, and various community publications that made mention of our club. Richardson’s entry was awarded **First Place** in this category.

Our **Letha H. Brown Literacy Award** submission centered on the work done at Terrace Elementary School with Pre-K children. Education Committee Co-Chairs for 2016-2017, **Betsy Meggs** and **Linda McCollum**, reported that our activities were designed to enrich the Literacy and Language Development of the school’s youngest students. During the year, we provided and filled Enrichment Backpacks for the children to borrow over the



weekends. We conducted a series of Teddy Bear Time sessions, modeling for parents how to read and share a book with a child and giving the children a book of their own. Altrusa Richardson hosted a two-day Manners Party, giving each child a book to keep and celebrating with an ice cream party where they practiced using their good manners. Winning **First Place** (pictured below (l-r) Governor Linda Moore, Nancy Rohm, and International Director Kathy Jasckson), our club was awarded **\$50** from District Nine and **\$100** from Altrusa International. This money will be earmarked for Literacy during the 2018-2019 year (in addition to budgeted funds). This submission will be sent to Interntional for judging at the 2019 Altrusa Interntaional Convention.

The **Mamie L. Bass Service Award** submission for Richardson was titled, "Altrusa Richardson Takes Aim at Domestic Violence". **Jane Tucker** outlined how our club learned of unmet needs for abuse victims. We donated hand sewn pillowcases, pillows, toiletries, baby and women's supplies, books and book cases to assist those being helped by Hopes Door New Beginning Center. Our entry in this category received **Third Place**.

On behalf of the club, I submitted the **Edith DeBusk President's Award** Report. It was a review of what the club did during the 2016-2017 club year. Using my theme, "Every Day is a Celebration! Service, Leadership, Friendship", I wrote in detail about each of the goals from our Strategic Plan: #1 -Improve the quality of life in the community, #2 - Enhance image and increase visibility to community, #3 - Retain, recruit, and involve, #4 - Provide skills for sustainability and growth, and #5 - Achieve and maintain financial solvency. Our entry in this category won **First Place**. I was awarded a personal check for **\$50** by the District. I will donate it to our Richardson Foundation earmarked for KAN activities next year.



(pictured above l-r) Nancy Rohm receives Edith DeBusk award from Governor Linda Moore.



Membership Workshop Recap

by Alma Benoit, Conference Delegate

After attending the District Nine Conference Membership Workshop, I came away with two major impressions: Firstly, don't ask someone to JOIN Altrusa. That implies "I can quit if I tire of the organization". Rather, ask someone to BECOME an Altrusan, which implies commitment to serving one's community. Secondly, as a club we are doing things RIGHT. So many of the suggestions and events presented here are ones we are currently implementing.

Upon signing in, we were assigned a musical instrument and told to sit at the correspondingly labeled table. There were three groups. Each group was presented with a question and held an open discussion on that question.

The questions:

1. Do you have small hands-on projects, either before or after meetings, or separate events to help prospective recruits know what Altrusa is?

Knowing that we can make a difference in this world is a great motivator. How can we know this and not be involved? - Susan Jeffers



Answers: This group shared that they schedule events after meetings to crochet caps for NICU babies. They also purchase and provide the NICU babies a copy of the book, *Oh the Places You Can Go*, which the parents can use to document the child's progress throughout many years. Once a month, they have a second-hour program after a meeting for a hands-on project and invite friends to join in. They provide boxes throughout the community for a "Books and Bears" collection to distribute gently used books and stuffed animals. They crochet cancer hats for all ages and distribute them via the Snow Sisters in Ft. Worth. They provide containers in various locations, i.e., break rooms, to collect pop-tops for Ronald McDonald house – then invite those who contribute the pop-tops to accompany us to make the presentation to Ronald McDonald House. They make a meeting a fun meeting and they had a Bunko night, invited guests and provided prizes. **I spoke about our annual Kindness Ninja Weekend.**

All of these events present the opportunity to introduce prospective members to Altrusa and its service to the community as well as provide current members with social and retention opportunities. **Immediately what came to**



mind were our NICU blankets, Kindness Ninja Weekend projects, Ability House, Seniors events, pop-top collection, retention luncheons and themed dinners, Painting with a Twist and various collections benefitting NETWORK, to mention a few.

2. What can you do to avoid "cliquishness" in your club?

Answers: Assign seating by creative means such as randomly assigning an item (i.e., musical instrument) to attendees that groups and seats people accordingly. Provide fun icebreakers, i.e., have members turn in odd facts about themselves and let the other members try to guess who it is.



Our "Spotlight" and inviting the recipients of our service projects and grants to our meetings and activities came to mind.

3. What do you do as an Altrusan to tell the Altrusa story?

Answers: This group uses social media and include our Facebook and web addresses on our club banner and letterhead. They use our website, brochures and word-of-mouth, exhibit at craft shows, and other community events. They also put brochures in the Chamber of Commerce brochure rack.

Other suggestions for Members: Wear your pin/t-shirts at service projects to provide the opportunity for others to ask "What is Altrusa?" When recruiting new members, think of your committees and service projects and seek individuals and employees of your community organizations that would be a good fit for those projects. Invite them to join in your projects. Recruit directly from a local ASTRA club (if you have one) and pay their membership for the first year. Work on incorporating diversity of age, talent, etc. in your club to ensure new ideas and growth. Invite men to join your club. Keep membership as a PRIORITY at your meetings. Expose local business contacts to Altrusa through underwriting opportunities, raffle item requests, and invitations to events. **OWT and our overall communications program encompass so many of the aforementioned.**

In summary, invite others to BECOME an Altrusan and keep on doing what we are doing as a club! Then, consider other ideas presented here to enhance recruitment and retention efforts.



Highest Number of First Timers



(pictured l-r) President Sue McElveen receives the award for the Highest Number of First Timers attending the 2018 Conference by Jack Arthur

First Timer Perspective

By Lynn Solomon

From a "first timer", I thoroughly enjoyed the conference. I especially enjoyed the attention given to the "first timers"....it made us feel special! We had a pre-conference meeting where they explained the entire weekend process so we would feel comfortable about what we were supposed to be doing. Then, they divided us into groups for a scavenger hunt that ended on Sunday morning. This enabled us to get to know Altrusans from other clubs in a shared activity. Also, throughout the weekend, they drew for prizes just for the "first timers". It was lots of fun and made us feel a part of everything. The other experience I enjoyed about conference was the time shared with the other attendees from our club. Loved getting to know them better. We all laughed and learned together! To the organizers of District Nine Conference 2018, I say "good job"!!



Lynn Solomon (pictured above far left) poses with her First Timers Scavenger Hunt Team winning First Place.



Leadership Workshop

By Sarah Nesbit, Conference Delegate

International Director Kathy Folley and District Nine Governor-Elect Beth Blair conducted the Leadership Workshop, outlining the qualifications for International and District Program Teams and Board positions. The overarching theme was that serving at these elevated levels is important for our growth as Altrusans and that we were all capable of meaningful service beyond our own clubs.

Board qualifications for the District Nine Board state that candidates must be a past club president to be qualified to serve. International Board Members must be past

District Governors to serve on that board. District Nine Board and Program Team members are required to attend District Conference



every year and International Board and Program Team members must attend the International Convention every other year. International Committee Chairs host workshops at the Convention.

District Nine Program Team members come from a wide variety of clubs, including those who have served as Club Presidents and District Governors. It was not stated specifically, but I believe board service at the club level would be a prerequisite for this elite group. Our own past governor, Mary Osentowski, served on the Edith DeBusk President's Award team this past year.

Attendees were encouraged to consider service at these levels, reiterating that no one wants you to fail and encouragement is part of the Altrusa "DNA" for leaders with available mentors forming a strong support system of friends who will lift you up as you assume responsibility.

Beth Blair outlined four "Musts" for those who are willing to serve at the District or International level as she and Kathy Folley threw out small rubber ducks to those who contributed to the conversation (mine is pink, symbolizing the need to "get your feet wet"):



- Time
- Commitment
- Focus
- Most of all, a **Passion** for Altrusa



During the Sunday Memorial Service, we honored our beloved Richardson Altrusan, Jan Skinner.

My Conference Perspective

By Alam Benoit



"It was my honor to attend the Sixty-Second Annual District Nine Conference as one of your delegates. As a First Timer, I encourage all who have yet to attend a conference or convention to do so. I learned much more about Altrusa, its structure, the Altrusa Foundation, service projects and community outreach. I left thankful for the opportunity to be a member of an incredibly benevolent family with wide-reaching effects on our society, and proud to have BECOME an Altrusan."



My Conference Perspective

By Cindy Murray

New this year was the addition of the "Foundation Breakfast", which I really enjoyed (but they probably could have started at 7:30am (instead of 7:00am) and still had plenty of time). Since, the Foundation collected more than \$37,000 in donations, it was obviously very successful!



I really enjoyed the ALL Conference workshop. Dr. Sulak did a terrific job! The Keynote speaker Brian Flocia was interesting. Brian (pictured below) is the author/illustrator and illustrator of numerous award-winning books for children, including *Locomotive*, winner of the 2014 Caldecott Medal, *Moonshot: The Flight of Apollo 11*, *Lightship*, and *The Racecar Alphabet*. He shared the evolution of children's book – from the blank page, to story development, image building, to editing and reediting, to design and print. I ended up buying four books for my grandchildren that he signed and created a personal illustration.



Fundraising Workshop

By Rosemary Gouger, Conference Delegate

The Fundraising Workshop was a round table discussion headed by Roxie Vincent. In this discussion, I found that our Outstanding Women of Today (OWT) Awards Luncheon is unique to Altrusa Richardson. None of the other clubs have this. One club does a Woman of the Year event, but it was the only thing similar to OWT.

Several opportunities were discussed such as having Patsy Sulak and her husband hold an evening or all-day workshop with vendors and meals. One of the Dallas clubs has held a fashion show for several years with much success. Others have suggested "Family Day", which is much like a fair where they brought in vendors and story tellers. Another suggested Fun Runs and Holiday Tour of Homes.

At the end of the session, it is agreed that all this is greatly dependent on being able to find willing sponsors for production, vending, and advertising. The amounts earned from these ranged from \$6,000.00 to \$10,000.00.

As I listened, and being new to Altrusa, I realized that Altrusa Richardson has already done some of these projects. Since our main fundraiser is OWT, I could only give my thoughts on what might be fun for our area as a fundraiser. Being a Chef, I have done some research on "Teddy Bear Teas" and understand their popularity. If you could put something like this together with a major sponsor, such as "Enchanted Fairies", the photography studio that is also very strong in supporting charities, as well as maybe a local Country Club and others, this might go very well in this area of Richardson, Plano, Frisco and North Dallas.



My Conference Perspective

By Sarah Nesbit

Altrusa District Nine Conference was a perfect opportunity to join our Altrusa sisters from all over the state and recommit to this community dedicated to service. In the President's Workshop I attended, Governor Linda Moore spoke extensively about the passion she and all of us have for Altrusa and its body of work. That word kept coming back and resonating in reports and in the awards that so eloquently reflect the Altrusa culture. It was invigorating to see our Richardson club win important honors that affirm and recognize our service to the community

KILLERS of Wellness: Keys to Programming Your Life for Success - Presented by Patricia J Sulak, MD

by Cindy Murray, Conference Delegate



Patricia Sulak, M.D., founder of Living WELL Aware™, is a nationally recognized practicing physician, researcher, speaker, and medical school professor. She graduated from the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio School of Medicine and was named

a Distinguished Alumnus.

In addition to her busy clinical practice, she presents throughout the country to businesses, organizations, schools, churches, and healthcare institutions on disease prevention through healthy living. Dr. Sulak is author of *Should I Fire My Doctor?* and the comprehensive wellness workbook, *Living WELL Aware™: Eleven Essential Elements to Health and Happiness*.

Dr. Sulak gave an informative and inspire presentation and a summary is provided below:

What prevents us from being the best version we can be?

1. Refuse to GET RID of what is destroying our health and happiness:
 - Don't think "Give Up". Think "GET RID!"
2. Worried or angry about other people's problems/issues MORE than our own problems:
 - Focus on: "I have problems I need to work on! I have to work on me, not them".
3. Live in the EXCUSES world:
4. Live in the PAST. I can't get over:
 - Refuse to be a VICTIM. Choose instead to be VICTORIOUS!
5. We think it is OK because everyone else does it.
6. What others do is their business. What you do in YOUR business.
 - Dare to be DIFFERENT!
7. We don't know who we want to be.
8. We do not make HEALTH a PRIORITY

THE PROBLEM – It's so easy to focus on things NOT in our control! THE GOOD NEWS – So much IS in your control!

Be open to change in ALL aspects of Life!

1. Physical health
2. Emotional well-being
3. Social connections

4. Financial decisions
5. Spiritual wellness

Keys to a successful journey are Living WELL Aware

1. Envision what you can be
2. Believe you can change
3. Own it
4. Partner with others
5. Invest time and energy

What determines your self-image? External Factors, Genetics, YOU!

YOU can change your Image. Don't live with a limited self-image.

Our brain = our mind's GPS (Global Performance System)

- Where is your GPS taking you? You determine the journey. Know your destination.
- If you don't like where you are headed, re-program to a POSITIVE destination (thoughts).

Why not imagine yourself successful? Get a new mental picture of yourself.

1. Within YOU is the ability and the power to do whatever you need to do to be happy and successful.
2. This power becomes available to you just as soon as you can change your beliefs.
3. The minute that we change our minds and stop giving power to the past, the past with its mistakes loses its power over us.
4. Accept negative feelings as a challenge.
5. Substitute gratitude for worry and anger.
6. Don't be afraid of making mistakes. Our GPS will guide us by going forward, monitoring our course, and immediately making corrections BECAUSE we are focused on the end result.

***“To BE it,
you have to
SEE it.”***

Patricia J. Sulak, MD

Friday Fun Night & Days for Girls



(pictured lower left) Altrusa Richardson President Sue McElveen proudly represents the club in the parade of banners.
(upper right pictured l-r) District Nine Past Governor Mary Osentowski, District Nine Treasurer Kimberly Kierce, and Altrusa Richardson President Sue McElveen enjoy an after-hours reception. (pictured middle right) District Nine Treasurer enjoy comraderie with Altrusa International Director Kathy Johnson.

