

**Altrusa International of
Central CT, Inc.**

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Lynne Havlicek
860-306-5110

Newsletter Editor

Elsie Mathews
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Meetings

2nd and 4th Wed.
Wadsworth Glen
starting at 6:30 pm.

Presidential Prose

Dear Altrusans,

October is here, and with it comes a season of possibility for our club. The crisp fall air reminds us change is in motion, and so are we!

We had a productive September program meeting, brainstorming ways to get our Altrusa name out there, creating partnerships with other non-profit organizations, and attracting new members to our club. (And the visit from Jamie and Kennedy brought smiles all around the table!) The outcome is that we are writing letters of encouragement for Girls Love Mail, but we are expanding our reach! We found a larger venue, and are inviting other women through Facebook, the Chamber, and contacts with our sister service organizations. Join us on **Tuesday, October 21st** for a Cider Social, and write a letter for GirlsLoveMail. These encouraging, handwritten notes will go into the hands of women newly diagnosed with breast cancer—a moment when a few kind words can truly make all the difference. What a beautiful way for us to share compassion, hope, and strength beyond the walls of our club.

I encourage each of you to take part. Bring your heart, your creativity, and your words of encouragement to this project. And why not bring a friend too! Together, we can lift spirits, remind women that they are not alone, and live out Altrusa's mission of service in a deeply personal way.

Our business meeting will be held on **Wednesday, October 8th** at Wadsworth Glen. Standard time – 6:30 pm. Please come early to socialize a little before we tackle business.

On **October 12th**, you can start to sell tickets for our fundraising raffle! This year we have 37 prizes, and the cost is only \$5. per ticket. Let's see if we can sell more tickets than in the past to raise awareness of the Altrusa name and our mission!

Let's make October a month of action, of service, and of joy in being part of something larger than ourselves.

In Service,
Linda Ring, President, Altrusa International of Central CT, Inc.





Oct 08: Business Meeting
Wadsworth Glen at 6:30pm

Oct 21: Program Meeting - GirlsLoveMail
TUESDAY Middletown Police Station
Community Room
222 Main Street
Middletown, CT
6:00pm – 8: 00pm

** ** ** ** **

Mark Your Calendar

District One Workshop
UConn Campus
Storrs, CT
November 8, 2025



MEMBER MEETING

Breakfast

October 20 – Dan Hurley, Head Men’s Basketball Coach, UConn. At Sheraton Hartford South Hotel on 100 Capital Blvd in Rocky Hill from 7-9am.

Events

October 14 – Lunch & Learn Identity Theft Prevention for Retirees at Chelsea Groton Bank on 21 Pennsylvania Ave in Niantic, CT from 12:00pm – 1:00pm

Business After Work

October 29 -Unmask the New Look at Courtyard by Marriott on 4 Sebethe Drive in Cromwell from 5-7pm

Happy Halloween

Altrusa Accent at Upcoming Meetings

October 8	Kathleen Didato
November 12	Cathy Boone
December 10	None- Holiday Party
January 14	Suzanne Morello
February 11	Pat Jackowski
March 11	Hilda Schmidt
April 8	Liz Brantley

NOTE: If the scheduled member is unable to present, please create your accent and ask someone else to read it at the meeting or swap dates. ☺

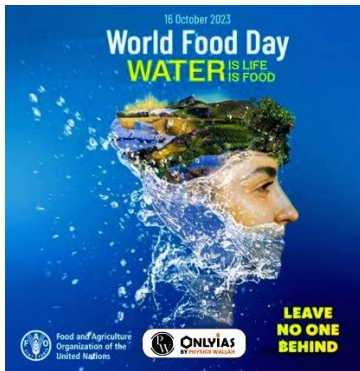
Birthday Wishes

Michelle Fine October 10



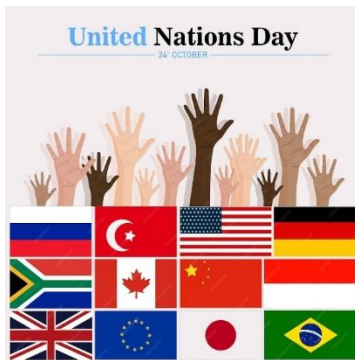
United Nations Spotlight

Please remember these two of many UN Days of Observance by the United Nations



United Nations World Food Day – October 16, 2025

World Food Day is an international day celebrated every year worldwide on October 16 to commemorate the date of the founding of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization in 1945. The day is celebrated widely by many other organizations concerned with hunger and food security. World Food Day 2025 is calling for global collaboration in creating a peaceful, sustainable, prosperous, and food-secure future. By working together, across governments, organizations, sectors, and communities, we can transform agrifood systems to ensure that everyone has access to a healthy diet, living in harmony with the planet.



United Nations Day – October 24, 2025

UN Day marks the anniversary of the entry into force in 1945 of the UN Charter. With the ratification of this founding document by the majority of its signatories, including the five permanent members of the Security Council, the United Nations officially came into being. 24 October has been celebrated as United Nations Day since 1948. In 1971, the United Nations General Assembly recommended that the day be observed by Member States as a public holiday.

Pat Jackowski

Girls Love Mail



Girls Love Mail aims to offer the **GIFT** of hand-written letters to women newly diagnosed with breast cancer. October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. This is the time we sit down and write a letter of encouragement. It only takes you 10-15 minutes. But the woman who receives your letter will never forget you!

A hand-written letter has the special power to heal. Girls Love Mail collects your hand-written letters of encouragement, bundles them, and sends them, via the caring staff at cancer centers, to women newly diagnosed with breast cancer. Every letter is a gift from you to a woman going through a difficult time.

Visit their website GirlsLoveMail.com to review the guidelines and see some sample letters. Here's a quick review.

- Every letter is a gift 📁 so please take your time and write something the recipient will treasure and save.
- Write from your Heart. No matter how clumsy the words, if it comes from the heart, you can't miss!
- **Hand-Write** your Letter.
- Avoid Death, Bad Language, and Religious Convictions
 - **DEATH:** It's difficult for someone newly diagnosed to hear about others who have died from cancer or other diseases. Mention your loved one without sharing the outcome. For example, "My grandmother fought breast cancer and she liked to wear a different wig every day."
 - **LANGUAGE:** As a 501(c)3 who works with public hospitals, we keep it extra clean. The following are **banned:**
 - Hell (ex: Breast Cancer is hell.)
 - Cancer Sucks
 - Kick Cancer's Butt
 - Dirty or off-color jokes
 - Quotes with banned words and phrases that include "badass" and the like.
 - **RELIGION:** Refrain from religious references such as quoting scriptures, telling how/who to worship, "God Bless You," or other religious overtures. **We do allow "I'm praying for you" once in your letter.**
- Greeting, Signature, and No Date
 - Begin with "Dear Friend" or "Dear Sister."
 - End by signing your first name and last initial **(Linda R. - An Altrusan).**
 - Do NOT date your letters.
 - Do NOT reference holidays.
- Stationery & Envelopes – Feel free to use any card, stationery, postcard, or other standard size paper of your choosing that **fits or folds into our special GLM Envelope measuring 4.75" x 6.5" (announcement size).** We use our own envelopes; you can keep the envelopes that come with your stationery.

Bring your letters to the next meeting and I'll send them in at the end of October! Thanks!

Linda Ring



Join the women of Altrusa as we gather to **handwrite inspirational letters** for women who are newly diagnosed with breast cancer. Your words can bring strength, comfort, and hope to someone facing one of life's toughest journeys.

Bring a friend!!

Girls Love Mail™
Inspire Hope Through
Handwritten Letters



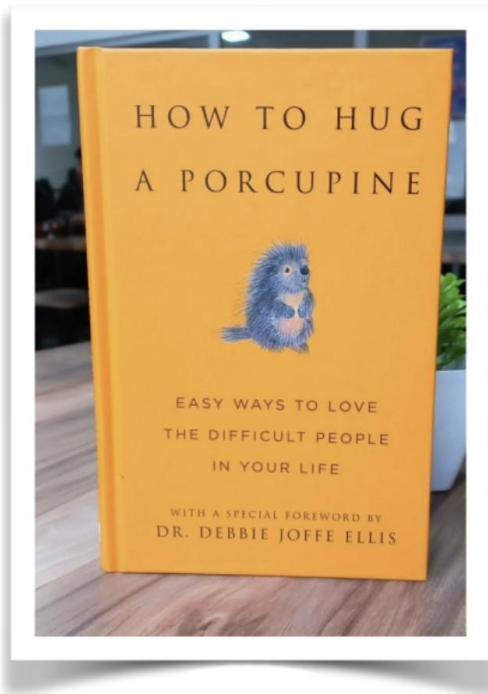
Tuesday
October 21, 2025

MIDDLETOWN POLICE STATION,
COMMUNITY ROOM
222 MAIN ST. MIDDLETOWN, CT

6:00 PM TO 8:00 PM

REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED.

QUESTIONS? CALL 860-490-8211
ALTRUSA.CENTRALCT@GMAIL.COM



“How to Hug a Porcupine” By June Eding

We all have them in our lives—the people who seem genetically designed to test our patience, drain our energy, and provoke our deepest frustrations. They are the human porcupines: prickly, defensive, and seemingly impossible to love. June Eding’s “How to Hug a Porcupine” offers a compassionate and practical guide to navigating these challenging relationships without getting hurt, arguing that beneath the sharp quills of difficult behavior often lies hidden pain waiting for a gentle touch.

This book is a straightforward manual for maintaining your sanity and compassion when dealing with consistently difficult people—whether they are family members, colleagues, or friends. Rather than focusing on changing the “porcupine,” Eding provides readers with concrete strategies for changing their own reactions and approach. The book combines psychological insights with simple, actionable techniques for setting boundaries, communicating effectively, and protecting your own emotional well-being while still extending empathy to those who make it difficult.

Key Takeaways (10 Lessons from the Book)

1. **You Can't Change the Porcupine, But You Can Change Your Approach:** The foundational principle is to stop trying to fix or change the difficult person and instead focus on managing your own responses and boundaries.
2. **Don't Take the Bait:** Difficult people often try to provoke a reaction. Learning to recognize and refuse to engage in their patterns of argument and blame is the first step to disarming the dynamic.

How to Hug a Porcupine (continued)

3. Set Boundaries with Love, Not Anger: Effective boundaries are not punishments; they are clear, calm statements of what you will and will not tolerate, designed to protect the relationship as much as yourself.
4. Understand the "Why" Behind the Quills: Often, porcupine behavior stems from fear, insecurity, past trauma, or a feeling of being threatened. Cultivating curiosity about the root cause can foster empathy.
5. Use "I" Statements to Deflect Blame: Communicate your feelings without accusation by using phrases like "I feel hurt when..." instead of "You always..." This reduces defensiveness and opens the door for calmer dialogue.
6. Lower Your Expectations: Expecting a difficult person to suddenly become easygoing sets you up for disappointment. Accepting them as they are (while protecting yourself) releases resentment.
7. Pick Your Battles Wisely: Not every provocation requires a response. Ask yourself if the issue is truly important enough to warrant the emotional energy of a confrontation.
8. Practice Detached Compassion: You can care for someone without carrying their emotional baggage or trying to solve their problems. This means being kind from a distance that feels safe for you.
9. Your Well-being is the Priority: You cannot pour from an empty cup. The book emphasizes that self-care is not selfish; it is essential to having the resilience needed to deal with challenging relationships.
10. Sometimes, the Hug is From a Distance: "Hugging" the porcupine doesn't always mean physical closeness. It can mean wishing them well from afar, releasing the relationship with love, or simply maintaining cordial, limited contact.

Eding's book is valuable for its simplicity and practicality. The central theme is empowered detachment. The "porcupine" metaphor is effective because it immediately conveys the dual nature of the challenge: a desire for connection and the reality of self-protection. The book's tone is non-judgmental and supportive, acknowledging how painful and exhausting these relationships can be. It avoids complex psychological jargon, making its strategies accessible for everyday use. The core message is one of shifting responsibility: you are responsible for your own boundaries and reactions, but you are not responsible for the difficult person's happiness or behavior. This is a crucial distinction for finding peace.

More Convention Workshop Notes and Ideas!!

MEMBERSHIP! I attended 2 workshops on Membership, Recruitment and Retention. These ideas were discussed at our Brainstorming session on September 24th.

Workshop: “What you Focus on Grows: Cultivating a Club Rooted in Love, Literacy and Legacy” was presented by Nancy Norris, incoming International Membership Chair 2025-2027, District Six. Her Key messages:

- Challenge each member to bring in one new member this biennium.
- Streamline the membership process (some clubs require new members to attend several meetings and events before inviting them to become Altrusans.)
- Streamline orientation.
- What is your WHY? WHY did you become an Altrusan?
- Membership is an INVESTMENT into your club’s future!

Workshop: “**How to Recruit and Retain Great New Members**”, was presented by Debbie McBee, Immediate Past Governor, District Twelve. Her presentation is on the Altrusa Website at this link. I noted these Key messages:

- Be sensitive to not over-commit. Beware of member burnout.
- Sometimes you are a leader; sometimes you are a contributor.
- Express appreciation for everyone’s efforts.
- Follow these steps:
 - Recruit
 - Support your new member
 - Work to retain your current members
 - Educate your community about who and what Altrusa is!

Workshop: **One World: Collaborating in International Service** I was also interested in ideas for International Service Projects... so I attended a service committee workshop presented by Scott Tice, International Service Chair 2025-2027 and Lorraine Brewer, Vice Chair. Their presentation is available on the International website at this link. Most clubs struggle with ideas, contacts and funding for new projects. This workshop gave many examples of ways to become involved with existing projects to make a larger impact. They highlighted projects that celebrated International Awareness within our borders, then went on to suggest programs that could be contacted and expanded upon for future projects.

Workshop: **Healthy Aging: Doing what we can to Age Well & Navigate Issues** The last workshop I attended was presented by John McBee, MD (husband of Debbie McBee, Immediate Past Governor District Twelve) Dr. McBee had slides and statistics to acknowledge the effects of aging on our bodies and minds. He stressed that **Physical Exercise is ESSENTIAL to Body and Brain Health!** As we age, we also decrease our functional reserves.

Convention Workshop Notes (continued)

Did you know that the brain loses 2% of its weight over 10 years? His tips include:

- Acceptance
- Be Proactive
- Limit Stress
- Don't Give Up
- Maintain purpose
- Modify expectations and find a middle ground

He closed his session with a story of a patient he had. We'll call her Emily. Emily was told that the best way to age gracefully, was to be active and to exercise every day. Dr. McBee received an invitation to her 100th birthday party. She told him that she went to the gym EVERY SINGLE DAY since receiving that advice!

It was a very engaging 4 days with Altrusans from all over the world. I was so glad to be able to attend! Next convention in 2027 is in Columbus, OH. It'll be a little longer of a drive, but probably well worth it! Mark your calendars now!

Linda Ring

Afghans for our Veterans



For the past several years, Altrusa has been fortunate to have the friendship and talents of Roberta Ritchie. She has crocheted many afghan blankets to help us continue our holiday project of gifting hand-made afghans to the lady veterans at Pfc. Nicholas A. Madaras home in Bridgeport. Roberta has been doing this at her own expense, never asking for anything in return.

At our September meeting, it was voted to present Roberta a check for \$100.00, in gratitude for her continued generosity and help with expenses. When she opened the card of thanks and check, she was truly shocked and overwhelmed. She said she never expected anything like this.

Roberta is such a great lady and friend. Thank you, Roberta!

Kathleen Didato

Look who came to the club meeting on her birthday...

Happy birthday, Barbara Arafah!



Raffle Update

We will distribute Raffle Tickets at the October 8th Business Meeting.

- You all will receive a book of 40 tickets with a price of \$5.00 a ticket.
- Tickets (sold and unsold) must be returned by Friday, December 5th.
- Remember, the ticket stub must be filled out in ink. Any tickets found with return address stickers will be disqualified.
- If every member sells or donates in kind their 40 tickets worth \$200.00, we will have \$3,600.00 to fund our projects in service to our community.

Good luck everyone!
Let's make this a raffle to remember.

*Raffle Committee,
Lynne H., Jamie S., Pat J., and Linda R.*

Dates to remember:

- October 8 – Meeting at Wadsworth Glen, starting at 6:30 pm
- October 8 – Deadline to book a room for Fall Workshop in Storrs
- October 12 – Together, we make it happen—sell those tickets!
- October 16 – UN recognizes World Food Day
- October 21 – Cider Social and letter writing campaign for GirlsLoveMail
- October 24 – UN Day
- October 24 or 25 – Make A Difference Day project – Placing Little Free Library at City Hall
- November 8 – Altrusa District One workshop in Storrs, CT
- November 12 – Business Meeting at Wadsworth Glen, starting at 6:30 pm

2025-2027 Biennium Logo
by Chris DeVliger



Altrusa International (excerpt from The Altrusa Compass)

M&M's by Chris DeVlieger, International President

I have loved M&M's for as long as I can remember. When I was growing up, M&M's were plain chocolate and came in six colors. In addition to them tasting great, I enjoyed them because they did not melt in my hands and make a mess which was a plus for a neat freak like me (even as a child). Over the years though, M&M's introduced peanuts, almonds, peanut butter cream as well as many other varieties and different colors for the holidays. You can even now order custom M&Ms direct from the factory with special designs like we enjoyed at the 2025 International Convention in Quebec. That's why I have chosen to combine my love for Altrusa and M&M's to create a visual theme this biennium.

The First M&M - Membership & Marketing We have a legacy rich in service and leadership. In order for us to grow as an international organization and continue leading to better communities, we must find new ways to attract and retain members. After all, Membership Matters. For us to achieve our membership goals in our Long-Range Strategic Plan, the International Board and Membership Committee is looking forward to collaborating on some innovative programs and resources to assist Clubs. This also includes succession planning or as I like to refer to as "building up leaders" (in reference to #1 of the Principles of Altrusa). We will share more about these initiatives as soon as possible, including the reporting of new measurements in the next publication.

The Second M&M - Mamie Moments We have a beautiful history of leaders who overcame challenges and grew our association. I have a deeper appreciation and understanding of this after visiting Altrusa documents archived at Ball State University. I enjoy history, so I was excited to learn more about Altrusa and Mamie Luella Bass. My excitement quickly became a little emotional. What I underestimated was the wealth of historical information and how humbling it is to be an Altrusan holding the original documents which Mamie wrote. I was also surprised to discover other Altrusans who played equally significant roles in launching Altrusa. Understanding our history is essential for ensuring continuous improvement and that we will be around another 100 years. Therefore, during this biennium, each Compass publication will contain a "Mamie Moment." A little bit of history for us to learn, understand and grow from.

(See the Altrusa Compass for the full article. Volume 8 issue 1)

Reminder on navigating the web...

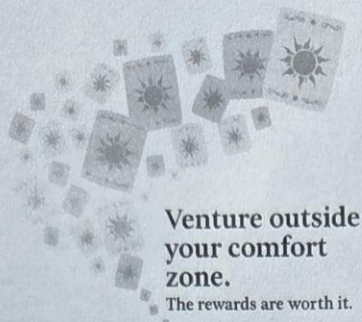
Where can you find more information about District One? <https://districtone.altrusa.org/>

Where can you find more information about Altrusa International? <https://www.altrusa.org/>

www.altrusastore.com (purchase Altrusa branded items including pins and banners)

Give International some feedback and share your thoughts on improving Altrusa with the [Suggestion Box](#).

If you have forgotten your password to the site please send an e-mail to Altrusa@altrusa.org or call the International Office for assistance.



Let Service Light the Way

Altrusa District One

Registration Form for Workshop

Saturday November 8, 2025, 9AM – 3PM

Graduate Storrs – 855 Bolton Road, Storrs, CT 06268 860-427-7888

Name _____

Preferred name on Name Tag _____

Email address _____

Club _____

First Timer to Workshop (if you've never attended a workshop) Please circle YES

Come and meet other Altrusans from across our District. Learn more about Altrusa and how to serve your community.

Early Bird Fee for those registering by 10/26/2025 \$75.00

Regular Fee for those registering after 10/27/2025 \$80.00

Day of Event registration fee \$85.00

First Timer registration fee \$40.00

Your registration fee includes the cost of the lunch buffet and beverage through the day.

Hotel rooms may be reserved at a rate of \$249.85 by using this link by October 8, 2025

<https://www.hilton.com/en/book/reservation/rooms/?ctyhocn=BDLGSGU&arrivalDate=2025-11-07&departureDate=2025-11-08&groupCode=90I>

Send your registration form to: Diane O'Reilly, 432 Alison Drive, Torrington CT 06790

Our literacy projects can help this happen...



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Middletown, CT 06457

