



Central Breeze

Altrusa International of Central CT, Inc.

Volume 26, Issue 02

February 2026

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

Presidential Prose

♥ February.... It may be cold outside, but things are definitely heating up in Altrusa! While many of us are happily staying in, wrapped in sweaters and avoiding icy sidewalks, our club activities are moving full speed ahead—and with lots of heart.

Our Spencer Readers continue to make a difference, award submissions are being carefully prepared, poems are being gathered, and high schools are being contacted for our Community Service Award Nominees. It's a wonderful reminder that even during the winter months, Altrusans stay busy spreading literacy, encouragement, and opportunity.



Thank you for saying "yes" to the behind-the-scenes work, the emails, the planning, and the follow-ups. These projects don't happen by accident—they happen because of you, and I am deeply grateful for your time, talents, and teamwork.

With Valentine's Day in the air, it feels especially fitting to say how much I love this club—your dedication, your teamwork, and your willingness to step up (even when it's cold and the couch looks very inviting!). I'm also looking forward to warming up together on Zoom with District Director Barbara Leavey from the Seacoast Club at our February Business Meeting, 2/11/26.

Please try to join us at District One Conference, *Lighting the Way for Leadership*, May 1-3, 2026 in Nashua, NH. It will be a great opportunity to connect, share ideas, and feel the wider strength of Altrusa beyond our own club.

Thank you for all you do to keep our mission strong and our club thriving—even if you're doing it with a mug of hot cocoa close by. ♥

In Altrusa Service,
Linda



Upcoming EVENTS

Feb 11 Business meeting on Zoom with District Visitor at 6:30pm

Feb 25 Program meeting TBD

Mar 11 Business meeting at Wadsworth Glen at 6:30pm

SAVE THESE DATES:

District One Conference
Nashua, NH
May 1-3, 2026

Altrusa International Convention
July 21–24 2027
Columbus, Ohio

Altrusa Accent at Upcoming Meetings

February 11	Pat Jackowski
March 11	Hilda Schmidt
April 8	Liz Brantley
May 13	Virginia Townes

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. ☺



MEMBER MEETING

Breakfast

February – None scheduled this month. At Sheraton Hartford South Hotel on 100 Capital Blvd in Rocky Hill from 7-9am.

SAVE THE DATE: March 16 - Geno Auriemma, UConn Women's Head Basketball Coach

Events

February 23 - March 1 – Taste of Middlesex at multiple Middletown Restaurants with varying prices.

Business After Work

February 17 – Water's Edge Resort & Spa at 1525 Boston Post Road in Westbrook, CT from 5:00 – 7:00pm

Birthday Wishes

No club members have a birthday in February



United Nations February 2026 Observances

The International Day of Human Fraternity, observed on February 4, promotes unity, tolerance, and peace among diverse cultures and religions.

International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation is observed February 6. More than 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone female genital mutilation. This year, nearly 4.4 million girls will be at risk of this harmful practice. This equates to more than 12,000 cases every day. Although reduced annually by a third, the practice is still a current global atrocity.

World Pulses Day, February 10 World Pulses Day, February 10 was established by the UN in 2018 and has been celebrated annually since 2019. The day aims to raise awareness about the nutritional benefits of pulses, which include chickpeas, lentils, dry beans, and peas, among others. Pulses are recognized for their role in sustainable agriculture and food security which contributes to the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

International Day of Women and Girls in Science, February 11 aim is to ensure full and equal access for participation in science for women and girls. (More details below.)

World Radio Day, February 13 celebrates the radio as a way of educating people, providing information, and promoting freedom of expression across cultures.

World Day of Social Justice, February 20 encourages people to look at how social justice affects poverty eradication. It also focuses on the goal of achieving full employment and support for social integration.

International Mother Language Day, February 21 annually celebrates language diversity and variety worldwide.

Pat Jackowski

International Day of Women and Girls in Science, February 11 Building a Future for Women in Science

2025 marks the 10th anniversary of the International Day of Women and Girls in Science (IDWGS) and the 30th anniversary of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#), two significant milestones in the global effort to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Gender equality in science is crucial for building a better future for all, yet women and girls continue to face systemic barriers and biases in pursuing scientific careers



Closing the gender gap in science requires breaking stereotypes, promoting role models to inspire girls, supporting women's advancement through targeted programs, and fostering inclusive environments through policies and actions that promote inclusion, diversity and equity.



Women and girls belong in science, and their inclusion fosters innovation

Joint Service Club Luncheon Plans

Soroptimist International of Central Connecticut will be hosting this year's Joint Service Clubs Luncheon.

Since everyone seemed to really enjoy the lovely lunch planned last year at the Casa Mia, we decided to return there again this year for Lunch on Saturday, March 7th. We will meet in the Sorrento Room on the first floor and enjoy multiple courses served Family Style at each table. The menu will include 2 appetizers, 2 pastas, salad, bread, 2 main entrees accompanied by mixed vegetables and potatoes, cake for dessert with ice cream, and coffee, tea, and water. The cost of this lunch, including service charge, has increased slightly this year to \$42 per person.

Our Lunch Program will include time for each club to share information about projects they have been working on, presentation of our Live Your Dream Award, and one of our Connecticut Soroptimists, Joanne Moore, will talk with us about her recently published children's book "New Home, New Friends."

Looking forward to seeing you all on March 7th! In the meantime, please stay safe and warm.

Thanks,
Kathie Lang, President
Soroptimist International of Central CT



Joint Service Luncheon

Altrusa International of Central CT
Alpha Delta Kappa Beta
Civitan Club of Middletown
Soroptimist of Central CT

We will enjoy a family style luncheon as we celebrate the services we provide to the community

Saturday, March 7, 2026
11:30 AM – 3:30 PM

*Casa Mia at the Hawthorne
2421 Berlin Tpke, Berlin CT 06037*

\$42/pp – Cash Bar

RSVP to your Club President or Secretary by February 22, 2026

*For additional information contact:
Kathie Lang 203-641-9472 or note4kathiel@aol.com*

Please RSVP to Linda on or before Sunday, 2/21. Make your check payable to Altrusa International of Central CT, and we will make one payment to Soroptimist Club that day.

Altrusa Accent by Suzanne Morello on January 14, 2026

*No act of kindness, no matter how small, is never wasted Aesop
Be kind whenever possible; it is always possible Dalai Lama XIV*

Excerpts from an article on Kindness from the Mental Health Foundation in UK:

What do we mean by kindness?

- Kindness is choosing to do something that helps others or yourself, motivated by genuine warm feelings.
- Kindness, or doing good, often means putting other people's needs before our own. It could be by giving up our seat on a bus to someone who might need it more, or offering to make a cup of tea for someone at work.

Evidence shows that helping others can also benefit our own mental health and wellbeing by reducing stress, improving mood, self-esteem and happiness. Helping others doesn't need a lot of time or money. Small changes can make a difference.

What are the health benefits of kindness?

- There is some evidence to suggest that when we help others, it can promote changes in the brain that are linked with happiness
- It creates a sense of belonging and reduces isolation by helping create, maintain and strengthen social connections. Volunteering is one way to obtain this.
- It helps keep things in perspective. A different perspective can impact your own life circumstances by being aware of your own acts and the things you are grateful for.
- It helps to make the world a happier place – one act of kindness can often lead to more! Things as simple as paying for the next person in line when you stop for coffee.

Always Keep others in mind

- it's important to keep in mind that we are being kind for the benefit of others even though it can make us feel good.
- Part of being kind is considering the feelings of others, so it is very important that your kindness is something which others will find helpful.
- See what you can do that others are not doing already. For example, if you want to donate to a food bank, see what they need before buying things.

Just don't over do it!

- It's very easy to give away all of our energy, especially if we are finding things hard ourselves and want to focus on others. Leave enough for you –kindness has to start with yourself.

Altrusa Accent (continued)

Acts of Kindness

- Volunteer for a local community organization
- Offer your expertise and support as a mentor; share a skill
- Check in with a neighbor or friend
- Support your children's schools by offering to read stories
- Involve your friends and neighbors in community projects
- Call a friend you haven't talked to in a while
- Send a handwritten thank you note
- Tell your family how much you love and appreciate them
- Offer to help a vulnerable/elderly neighbor
- Smile and say hello to someone you pass everyday but haven't spoken to
- Pick up trash lying on the street

It's also important to be kind to yourself

- Try to find something to celebrate each day
- Tune out voices of judgment and comparison.. focus on the voice that says 'you are enough'
- Prioritize some 'me' time each week
- Tune out of social media for a day, week or longer
- Treat yourself to something - even as small as a latte
- Do something you enjoy
- Spend time in nature - great for mental health

Artifical Intelligence will never replace kindness.

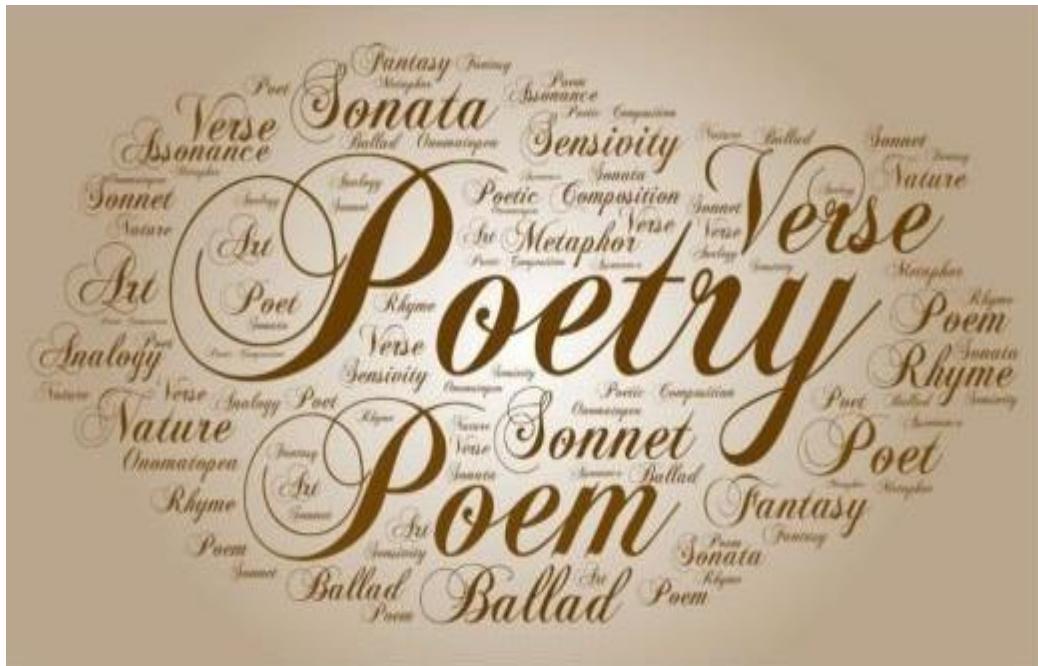
As artificial intelligence continues to transform industries and daily life, experts and community leaders across Connecticut are echoing a powerful truth: while AI may streamline tasks, it will never replicate the human capacity for kindness. Machines can mimic speech, automate care responses, and even generate lifelike conversations, but they can not feel empathy or offer the warmth of a sincere human gesture. "You can teach a robot to say 'I'm sorry,'" said Dr. Elaine Roberts, a psychologist at UConn, "but only a person can mean it." In hospitals, classrooms, and homes, kindness is often what makes the difference between routine service and true connection.

Local residents are already seeing the importance of compassion in an increasingly automated world. Volunteers at Hartford's Hands of Hope

shelter noted that even as tech helps manage logistics, it's human kindness that brings comfort to those in crisis. "AI helps us find beds and meals faster," said coordinator Jamal Thompson, "but it's a smile or a hand on the shoulder that gives people dignity." As Connecticut and the world continue to innovate, communities are reminded that kindness isn't just irreplaceable—it's essential.

So, as AI continues to have an impact on our lives and finds new ways to improve productivity and enhance learning, one fact remains clear: Kindness is here to stay. It's the art and act of listening to each other, recognizing emotion, extending a helping hand or an enthusiastic hug to a neighbor. Kindness is a choice not a task, and as long as humans stay connected as people and as communities it's a choice that most people will always make.





Altrusa's 33rd Annual Gerard F. Melito
Senior Citizens' Poetry Contest and
Reception

Letters have gone out to past poets, some new candidates, potential judges, and our library, senior center contacts. I'm just waiting for the poems to start pouring in!

Flyers are available. If you have an outlet to spread the word, please send our flyer! I've created an event on social media and shared the flyer there. Please like the post and share it to all your friends. This is the way to use Facebook to expand our reach and spread the word about Altrusa!

Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 18th to attend the reception where we will hear our poets recite their work and identify the contest winners. Virginia has done such a fabulous job as emcee... we're looking forward to another successful event.

Linda and cathy

33rd Annual
Gerard F. Melito
Senior Citizens' Poetry Contest

Altrusa International of Central Connecticut, Inc. is pleased to announce our
33rd Annual Gerard F. Melito Senior Citizens' Poetry Contest.

All senior residents of Central Connecticut, aged 65 or older, are encouraged to share their stories
and talents through the written word. All poems received are published in a booklet, distributed to
each participant and local library.

Our Poetry Reception will be on **Saturday, April 18, 2026**, at the Belden Library. Save the date!

Our rules and requirements are:

- The author must be a resident of Central Connecticut, aged 65 or older
- You may submit only one original poem. Your poem may have no more than 25 typed lines and no more than 250 words.
- Each poem must be an original. (If it was previously submitted to our Contest, or published anywhere else, it will be disqualified.)
- All entries must be emailed or postmarked by: **March 1st**
- Be sure to include your name, address, email and phone number
- Please submit your poems electronically to Altrusa.CentralCT@gmail.com

Or mail entries to:
Altrusa Senior Citizens' Poetry Contest
P.O. Box 2532
Middletown, CT 06457



To learn more about this event or our club





Altrusa International of Central CT, Inc. * P. O. Box 2532 * Middletown, CT 06457
Altrusa.CentralCT@gmail.com

Altrusa Club News

Highlights from January 14, 2026 Business Meeting Minutes

1. Altrusa Accent – Suzanne Morello

Suzanne gave an Accent about kindness. She will forward to Elsie for the February Central Breeze.

2. International Nominating Committee – Linda Ring

District One is eligible to nominate a candidate for the International Nominating Committee to Serve in the 2027-2029 biennium. Requirements are being an active member and having served as a Club President.

3. Spencer Readers – Pat Jackowski

Pat thanked the readers for their flexibility in scheduling because of all the sickness in the school. She commented that the program is going well, and the children adore the Altrusa readers. The feeling is mutual!!

4. Blankets of Warmth – Cathy Boone

Cathy hopped into Virginia's sleigh full of afghans and presents and rode to Bridgeport to deliver Christmas cheer to the lady vets and the ABRI Home. Gifts included presents for an eight year old girl in residence. It was a good trip.

5. Poetry – Cathy Boone, Linda Ring

Cathy reported April 25 is available and April 18 is a maybe for the Poetry event at Belden Library. She will email the membership with the final date. Cathy has started a Poetry how to write up.

6. HS Senior Community Service Award – Elsie Mathews, Lynne Havlicek

The committee will be discussing an amended participation district to reflect the lower CT river valley. They will also discuss any changes that need to be made to the application format.

7. Baby Food Project – Kathleen Didato

Kathleen was frustrated at the lack of response from local media regarding publicity. Looking for other local contacts to reach out to families in need. These include but are not limited to Middletown Firefighters and Police, Middletown Adult Ed., local Churches (St. Francis and St. Sebastian), Amazing Grace.

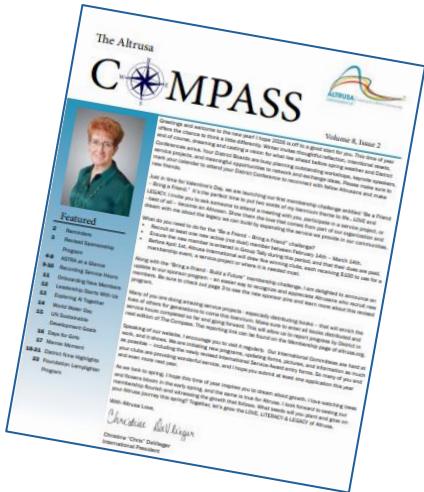
8. Painted Pots Activity – Pat Jackowski

Six members are interested in this project so far. Pat suggested it as a fundraiser for Spring Conference or just for fun. Pat will make the arrangements.

9. Save the Date – Pat J. has contacted Kathy Lange of Soroptimists regarding Joint Service Luncheon. Looking at March 7th.

10. Save the Date – April 22nd, Litchfield County Club, Fashion Show Fundraiser. They will reserve

The Compass



The **Compass** was delivered on January 29th. Be sure to make note of these interesting articles:

- New Sponsor Pin Program (replacing the number pins with something new)
- What's new with ASTRA; ASTRA's Global Service Project-KINDNESS DAY Postcards!
- Definition of Service Hours – All Service hours will be counted in one combined category, including
 - Club service projects and fundraisers;
 - Time given to Clubs, District and International as an officer or Chair;
 - Working on Altrusa projects;
 - Planning and implementing Conference, Convention or Workshop;
 - Volunteering in the community (only counts when wearing your Altrusa pin, name badge or official Altrusa apparel).
- Difference between Orientation and Onboarding and why it matters!
- Leadership Starts with US!
- Exploring AI Together – How to get started with ChatGPT, Notebook LM, Otter.ai, CANVA.
- UN Focus: World Water Day, March 22, 2026
- UN: Understanding the UN Sustainable Development Goals
- Continued support of Days for Girls program (Altrusa's International Service Project)
- News from the Mighty Ninth – Altrusa District Nine.
- Description of the Lamplighter Program – supporting the Altrusa Foundation.

Linda Ring

Good Intel from the Presidents Meeting on January 22, 2026

Governor-Elect, Wanda Pettersen, got to try out her meeting facilitation skills this month. Governor Susan is off on an African Safari!!!!

Notes:

- Leadership Committee sent out a survey to ask Presidents what information they needed to shape their presentation at Spring Conference.
- International Service Award Criteria (for Mamie, Letha, Nina) were updated in January. Be sure to use the latest version!
- Continue counting books for the International Service Goal of 1M+1 books donated in this biennium.
- International Nominating Committee is looking for candidates for the 2025-2027 biennium.
- Spring Conference 2026 will be held May 1-3 in Nashua, NH. The theme will be "Lighting the way for Leadership".
- Altrusa Service Project Database has been down for some time. Wondering when it would be up and working again.
- Wanda is asking International for a list of ASTRA clubs in colleges so that ASTRA who are graduating from high school can know if their college have an ASTRA club.
- Linda Ring is looking at club web pages and asking for updated information on President's contact, meeting, project information and any refreshed photos. Please send your club newsletter to Linda.Ring.Altrusa@gmail.com so she can upload them to your webpage.
- District Nine's monthly training sessions continue to impress! If you are able to attend on the 3rd Saturday of each month, it's a great opportunity!

Linda Ring

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.

KENNEDY'S OR NER



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