



## February 2026 Altrusagram



### Upcoming Dates

#### **Business Meeting New Member Initiation and Elections**

Wednesday, March 4  
6:00 P.M.  
Westbrook Community  
Center  
426 Bridge St.  
Westbrook, Me.

**Ronald McDonald House**  
Sue's Supper  
Tuesday, March 17

#### **Program Meeting Speaker : Rebecca Cole**

Teacher and member of NEA  
North Deering Tavern  
Wednesday, March 18  
6:00 P.M.

**Business Meeting**  
Wednesday, April 1  
6:00 P.M.  
Westbrook Community  
Center  
426 Bridge St.  
Westbrook, Me.



**District One Conference**  
**Sheraton Nashua**  
May 1 - 3, 2026  
11 Tara Blvd.  
Nashua, N. H.

### President's Message



February is busy with Valentine's Day, Presidents Day, Black History Month and more. It's a month we show our love of each other and our country, by remembering others.

The world is changing faster than ever. How are we responding to these changes? Are we feeling useful? As Altrusans we can answer that we volunteer in our communities in places we feel needed. When we volunteer our service projects connect us to something larger than ourselves, giving us purpose and a feeling of value.

Guided by the Principles of Altrusa we create partnerships that validate our existence; thus, we are agents of change in our communities, responding to our community's needs, changing the lives of those we serve and in turn, changing our own lives.

One example is our ABC Project where we go into local schools, read to kindergarten children and in partnership with Books-A-Million and personal donors of books, we give a book to each child to take home with them to keep. Each year we expand this project to include more schools and children. This project makes us proud of how we show up in our communities every year we do it!

This month our Club is very busy! We celebrated the addition of another new member to our Club at our business meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup>. We did some reading in the schools. We held committee meetings and started planning for next year's budget. Katie Berthiaume, from the Veteran's Home in Scarborough, was the guest speaker at our Program Meeting at North Deering Tavern in Portland on the 18<sup>th</sup>. She gave us an overview of the home along with some volunteer opportunities. And we're ending the month with more committee meetings.

I'd like to remind everyone to send cards or a note of encouragement to our members who are ill and/or unable to come to meetings. I send out emails to our membership with the Subject: "Altrusa Membership Updates "(as often as I get news to share.) It means a lot to them to get acknowledged, to be remembered.

Take some time to love yourself, too. Do something personal for yourself that makes you feel good. Take the time to read a good book or go to a movie or give yourself time to meditate or reflect. These things whatever you do for yourself, will help energize you to be able to give love to others.

I'm writing this in the middle of a blizzard. It's been a very cold month here in Maine. Stay warm! Stay in touch with family, friends and neighbors! It's so important to be present and to be seen by those around us. Help where and when you can.

Warm regards,  
Karen

*Altrusa is an international non-profit organization, making our communities better through leadership, partnership, and service.*

# Who We Are...

## The Board 2025 - 2026

Club President: : Karen Valley  
[book1babe@gmail.com](mailto:book1babe@gmail.com)

Foundation President: Martha Gross  
[grossmartha01@gmail.com](mailto:grossmartha01@gmail.com)

Vice President: Christine Johnson  
[cejinmaine@gmail.com](mailto:cejinmaine@gmail.com)

Secretary: Fran Jensen  
[franjensen2911@gmail.com](mailto:franjensen2911@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Marie Pike  
[pikerino2@aol.com](mailto:pikerino2@aol.com)

Foundation Director: Cathy Paglio  
[rpaglio1@gmail.com](mailto:rpaglio1@gmail.com)

Club Director: Trish Maxim  
[campnaples@fairpoint.net](mailto:campnaples@fairpoint.net)

Immed. Past President: Wanda Pettersen  
[kettlecove\\_6@msn.com](mailto:kettlecove_6@msn.com)

Parliamentarian: Judith Reidman  
[reidmanjudith7@gmail.com](mailto:reidmanjudith7@gmail.com)

## Committee Chairpersons 2025 - 2026

Communications Co-Chairs:  
Christine Johnson [cejinmaine@gmail.com](mailto:cejinmaine@gmail.com)  
Erin May Deprez [erinmaydeprez@gmail.com](mailto:erinmaydeprez@gmail.com)

Finance Chair:  
Marie Pike [pikerino2@aol.com](mailto:pikerino2@aol.com)

Membership Co-Chairs:  
Patricia Maxim [campnaples@fairpoint.net](mailto:campnaples@fairpoint.net)  
Debbie Lemieux [dalemieux33@gmail.com](mailto:dalemieux33@gmail.com)

Service Co-Chairs:  
Martha Gross [grossmartha01@gmail.com](mailto:grossmartha01@gmail.com)  
Cathy Paglio [rpaglio1@gmail.com](mailto:rpaglio1@gmail.com)

Program and Event Co-Chairs:  
Anita Chandler [achandler@maine.rr.com](mailto:achandler@maine.rr.com)  
Gail Mazzone [mestormy70@gmail.com](mailto:mestormy70@gmail.com)

# Altrusa International News

## Excerpts taken from the recent International Service Committee Newsletter

### Literacy Book Challenge

President Chris DeVlieger is continuing the One Book at a Time challenge, and we can all be a part of this worthy endeavor! Our goal is for Altrusans to distribute 1,000,001 books throughout the world and/or devote 500,000 literacy service hours to our communities during the 2025-2027 biennium.

How can your club participate?

1. Develop a literacy project (or expand one) in your community.
2. Assign a record keeper to keep track of the number of books distributed and/or the service hours dedicated to your literacy project.
3. Continue the project into next year.
4. Send your number to the International Service Committee before June 1, 2026. Use the entry form on the International website to record each time you donate books (have your record keeper log in and scroll down to the Book Challenge for the form).
5. Spread the love of reading throughout your community and around the world!

### Days for Girls

Thank you for your continued support of our international service project. In 2025, Altrusans donated a total of \$11,964.89 to Days for Girls. I know we can do even better in 2026! Go to [daysforgirls.org](https://daysforgirls.org) to donate online or mail a check to Days for Girls International, P.O. 2622, Mount Vernon, Wa 98273. Remember to annotate "Altrusa International" in the comments or on the memo line of your check for tracking purposes. Let's shatter the stigma of menstruation!

**DAYS FOR  
GIRLS**

At the International Convention last summer, members voted to transition from Club 21 to **Club 52**. Share the video below with your club to learn more about this program and become a charter member:  
<https://foundation.altrusa.org/giving-programs-2/club-52/>



**To All our Friends of Altrusa:** Visit us at [altrusaportland.org](https://altrusaportland.org) to learn how you can become an Altrusan.



Altrusa International Foundation of Portland, Maine, Inc.

[altrusaportland@gmail.com](mailto:altrusaportland@gmail.com)

PO Box 8834, Portland, ME 04104 USA

<https://districtone.altrusa.org>

<https://www.altrusaportland.org>

<https://www.altrusa.org>

## Altrusa Portland Program Meeting Speaker

Katie E. Berthiaume, Director of Life Enrichment and Volunteer Coordinator at Maine Veterans' Home in Scarborough, spoke at the program meeting on February 18th. She talked about the services provided by the Veterans' Homes (there are 6 locations in Maine) and specifically her group's role within the organization. Services provided include residential care, skilled nursing care/rehab and therapy, respite care, memory care and long-term care.

Surprisingly, there are several WWII vet residents including Christine Johnson's father Jim Born who is the oldest at nearly 104. Most vets being admitted now are Vietnam War age vets. Katie's group, which includes both staff and volunteers, provides all types of events and activities for the residents, including trips, bingo, music, arts & crafts, a happy hour, pen pal opportunities with school age children, and many other activities. They also make sure the residents' spiritual needs are met.

She handed out a Veteran Heroes calendar with pictures of the residents representing all homes. These include group pictures, and pictures of "featured" individual residents each month along with a brief story. Christine's father is the hero for the month for June. Their stories are fascinating!

Katie discussed potential volunteer opportunities and provided applications for anyone interested. We hope to have a further conversation with her to firm up how Altrusa can best help through volunteering, but we need a few folks to complete Volunteer Applications first. If you're interested in a calendar or application, please contact Christine.



Katie B. (left) and  
Karen Valley - President(right)



# Altrusa Portland

The Nominating Committee announced the following slate at the February 4th business meeting for the term – 2026-2028

Please plan to attend the **March 4<sup>th</sup> business meeting** to vote for next year's Club Officers. Nominations will also be taken from the floor.

**Club President –**  
Christine Johnson or Debbie Lemieux

**Vice President - \*\***

**Secretary -** Patricia (Trish) Maxim

**Treasurer -** Pamela Lemieux

**Club Director -** Gail Mazzone



\*\* Both President candidates have agreed that whoever receives the least amount of votes for President will become Vice President, unless a nomination for Vice President is made from the floor to run against them.

Thank you to the nominating committee: Wanda Pettersen Chair, Anita Chandler, and Fran Jensen for their work.

## From the Finance Committee

To all committee chairs: it's time to prepare your committee's 2026-2027 budget request. It must be submitted to Marie Pike no later than the end of the day Sunday, March 15th.



If you need to know the current year budget or year-to-date actuals, look at the financials that President Karen emailed to everyone prior to the February business meeting. Or contact Marie if you need help.

The finance committee will meet soon after the submission deadline to put together a draft of the budget. The draft will be presented to the board and then presented to the club. Approval of the budget requires a vote by the club.

Thank you in advance for submitting these timely.

# Altrusa Portland Committee News

Membership committee is gearing up for our newest "April is Add an Altrusan Month" Membership Drive. This will be held on the same night as our **22nd Annual Volunteer of the Year award** is presented.

Flyers and Posters will be made available to all members at our March 4th business meeting. Let's get the word out, invite and promote. Thank you.



**APRIL 15, 2026**

**6:00 - 8:00 PM**

To be held at:  
North Deering Tavern,  
1349 Washington Ave.,  
Portland

**SPECIAL EVENT  
WE WILL BE PRESENTING  
OUR 22<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL  
VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR  
AWARD**



**RSVP BY Sunday, April 12 to**  
Altrusaportland@gmail.com or DM on our  
Facebook Page. @AltrusaPortland  
visit us at:  
altrusaportland.org  
altrusa.org

# Altrusa Portland Service Committee News



Thank you for providing a delicious meal for our families. They loved the chop suey! We appreciate your continued support.

Best,  
Ronald McDonald House Staff

Our club is so grateful for the \$600 grant we received to help fund our Sue's Supper project at the Ronald McDonald House.

*This project was awarded grant funding by the Altrusa International Foundation, Inc. For more information, please visit [foundation.altrusa.org](http://foundation.altrusa.org).*



Left to right: Karen Valley, Ann Smith and Christine Johnson cooked and served the meal at Sue's Supper in February.

Hello,

**My name is Ja. H. My wife and I have been at the Ronald McDonald house in Portland going on 97 days today. Our daughter is in the NICU, she was born at 27 weeks and 4 days. It has been a real journey, to say the least.**

I am writing because one or more members of Altrusa has come to the Ronald McDonald house a couple of times since we've been here, and they have made what is easily the most delicious coleslaw we've ever had. They came again tonight 2/17, and when we tasted it we recognized it right away.

We are hoping we might be able to get a copy of their recipe so that we can make it for ourselves when we return home. If you cannot make that recipe available to us, that's quite alright. **In that case we will just settle for thanking you for making our stay a little brighter.**

Thank you,  
Ja. & Sa. H.



March 17  
Ronald McDonald House  
Sue's Supper



# Club News

## From the Membership Committee



Initiation was held on January 7 for our newest member, Ann Nappi. Due to illness, Kristina Kentigian was unable to attend. She will be initiated at our March 4 Business Meeting.

*Is Mother Nature finished playing her games with us or does she have more in store?*

This will be held at the Westbrook Community Center, Oak Room, at 6:00 P.M.



## Maine Senior Games announces the winner of their Legacy award

2026 is the 40th Anniversary of the Maine Senior Games. Anita Chandler is one of the founders and is being presented with this prestigious award.



If you are interested in celebrating with Anita when the Maine Senior Games presents her with the Legacy Award, here is the additional information that you need to know:

Maine Senior Games will be presenting Anita Chandler with a Legacy Award at their Celebration of Athletes on Friday, May 29, 2026 at the Elks Club on Congress Street in Portland. The event will begin at 4:30 pm and will include dinner, the annual award presentations, a silent auction and a Celebration of Athletes. No fee for attending but donations will be gratefully accepted.

If you will be going, please RSVP to Deb Smith ([n2ldeb@yahoo.com](mailto:n2ldeb@yahoo.com)) by March 1st.



The Altrusa Foundation of Portland Maine was so grateful to receive \$2,500 in donations from the members of 100+ Women Who Care Southern Maine.

Pictured here is Deb Bergeron of 100+ Women (left) presenting the checks to



February Birthdays of the Month

Ann Babbitt

Happy Birthday!

# Service Committee News

ABC

## Altrusa Books for Children



4 Altrusans visited 4 classrooms at the Saccarrappa School in Westbrook. It was a case of Divide and Conquer.

Wanda Pettersen read to 2 K-classrooms at Saccarappa School in Westbrook in February, while Fran Jensen assists by taking photos.



Martha Gross read to 2 K-classrooms at Saccarappa School in Westbrook in February, while Debbie Lemieux assists by taking photos.



### Service Committee meets:

At a recent meeting, committee agreed to submit our Volunteer of the Year Award for the Mamie Bass Award and ABC Literacy Program for the Letha Brown Award. These awards will be submitted to the District One Award committee chair for review. Winners will be announced at May District One Conference.

Finance Committee has requested committee budgets for 2026- 2027. And so we reviewed the budget and created a final budget,

We also discussed volunteer opportunities at the Maine Veterans Home. Wanda will reach out to their volunteer coordinator and discuss offering an activity/event every quarter- spring,summer.fall,winter. There are 4 sections to the Veterans Home.

Upcoming events: Scholarships, Birthday Party, Milestone Bags of Hope, and Toys for Tots event in August/September.

submitted by:

Cathy Paglio - Foundation Director and Committee Co-chair



ASTRA of Lake Region High School

Ability  
Service  
Training  
Responsibility  
Achievement



Cold & Snowy, February was a tough month for ASTRA meetings.

We had one meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 10th and managed to decorate and color 150 white bakery type bags for the 1st grader's "Vacation Activity Bags" at Songo Locks & Stevens Brook Elementary Schools.

ASTRA students & Guidance Staff stuffed the bags with a variety of activities on Wed/Thurs and delivered them to the two schools on Thursday afternoon for distribution to the 1st graders as they departed school on Friday afternoon for their Winter vacation.

During February vacation week, ASTRA President Katherine O'Connor was busily finalizing the "ASTRA Service Project" for entry to Altrusa District One's competition. She beat the March 1st deadline by several days.

The winner will be announced in Nashua, NH at District Conference on May 1-3. The winning club will receive a \$100 check from Altrusa Intn'l -- presented by our visiting International Representative. That entry will be submitted to the next International Convention in Columbus, Ohio in July 2027 for judging amongst the #1 entries of all Altrusa Districts internationally.

The next deadline for ASTRA's graduating Seniors is March 15th for the 4 scholarships from Altrusa International (2 @ \$2,000; and 2 @ \$1,000). Then March 31st for Portland Altrusa's \$500 scholarship.

In April, ASTRA will continue their annual "ABC" project in the local Kindergartens -- with the B.A.M. books provided by Portland Altrusa.

Thank you B.A.M., BAM customers, and Altrusa for supporting ASTRA.



# Other Things

Don't forget to input your Service Hours.  
Copy and paste this link into your browser:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfBA5kpTP2KnohBM77MIB7qwAm953gIU10L8wCWanf3Qbrtqg/viewform>

The International Association President wants us to enter literacy hours as a separate category.

from the  
Altrusagram  
editor



Many thanks in advance for all your efforts and your support in providing your input to Altrusa articles and photos.

Please email myself, Debbie, at [dalemieux33@gmail.com](mailto:dalemieux33@gmail.com) with anything you consider newsworthy. My deadline for submissions is the Friday following the Program meeting.

## Club Meeting Norms:

- ✓ Start and end on time
- ✓ Respect each other
- ✓ Accept differences
- ✓ No side Conversations, Cell phones silenced
- ✓ Provide a safe space to speak ones mind
- ✓ Abide by the democratic process
- ✓ Be engaged while present
- ✓ Assume others' good intentions
- ✓ Be open to the ideas of others
- ✓ No interruptions of speaker, speak one at a time



Thank you for continuing to fill up the green Altrusa **CLYNK** bags.

Pam Lemieux can give you as many bags with stickers as you ask for. Fill them with your returnables and Then:

1. drop them off at your local Hannaford's
2. drop the bags off at Pam Lemieux's house
3. or, bring to a meeting and give to Pam.

## Mark your Calendars

### District One Conference

Hosted by Past Governors  
Sheraton Nashua  
11 Tara Blvd  
Nashua, N.H.  
**May 1-3, 2026**