



March 2026 Altrusagram



Upcoming Dates

Business Meeting

Wednesday, April 1
6:00 P.M.

Westbrook Community Center
426 Bridge St.
Westbrook, Me.

Program Meeting Volunteer of the Year and

Membership Drive

North Deering Tavern
Wednesday, April 15
6:00 P.M.

Ronald McDonald House

Sue's Supper
Tuesday, April 21

District One Conference Sheraton Nashua

May 1 - 3, 2026
11 Tara Blvd.
Nashua, N. H.



Business Meeting Budget vote

Wednesday, May 6
6:00 P.M.

Westbrook Community Center
426 Bridge St.
Westbrook, Me.

President's Message

Spring has just arrived and it's a time of renewal. I've been listening to the birds returning to my yard. I'm seeing daffodils and other flowers popping up through the ground near the house. Yesterday, I could see green grass breaking through the murky brown. Today, I can't hear the birds, but I see the snowflakes falling covering the ground in a clean white blanket. Even if the snowfall amounts to a few inches, it'll be gone in a few days. And I know that Spring will return with warmer days to melt the snow which waters the plants and feeds the birds. We count on this happening, the changing of the seasons in New England. It's predictable.



But lately predictability like the weather is anything but predictable. We must listen and pay attention to what's happening around us: to ourselves, our families, our local and state communities and to our global communities.

So, as an Altrusan what does the promise of Spring mean to us? I like to think it means Spring forward into action. We've recently been invited by Altrusa International, challenged to be part of a membership expansion through the "Be a Friend - Bring a Friend Membership Challenge." Read more info in this newsletter. Here is a wonderful opportunity to grow our Club. Adding to our volunteer base will give us the opportunity to support our operations, to do more service projects, to continue to make a positive difference in our local communities and beyond.

It's as predictable as Spring. We will see change in our Organization and Club. By adding more members, we will "Love Bigger, Lead Stronger and Leave a Legacy" of hope in our communities because we'll be able to do more, to affect positive change, to continue to improve the lives of those we reach.

We have two meetings in April that we can bring a friend, a neighbor or an acquaintance to see and hear about our Club in person. Invite them along when you are volunteering to participate firsthand in what we do. We do have one prospective member pending and that's awesome! But let's make it at least two. Or more. Remember to tell them that if they join in April, they get 14 months of membership for the price of 12 months, good through May 2027.

We were fortunate to have Jodi Walencewicz, District First Vice Governor, visit us at our Program Meeting March 18th. She spoke to us about "venturing outside our comfort zones and the rewards will be worth it" in support of our District Governor's biennium theme, making a positive impression on us all. Rebecca Cole, local schoolteacher, our guest speaker for the evening, gave a lively presentation of her life and how she got to be where she is today through reading, acting, teaching, NEA and more. She's a gifted storyteller. Both were well received by those in attendance.

As I look out the window in front of my desk, the snow has changed to rain. Some birds are back. Spring is indeed here! I'm grateful!

Karen Valley

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

Foundation President: Martha Gross
grossmartha01@gmail.com

Vice President: Christine Johnson
cejinmaine@gmail.com

Secretary: Fran Jensen
franjenzen2911@gmail.com

Treasurer: Marie Pike
pikerino2@aol.com

Foundation Director: Cathy Paglio
rpaglio1@gmail.com

Club Director: Trish Maxim
campnaples@fairpoint.net

Immed. Past President: Wanda Pettersen
kettlecove_6@msn.com

Parliamentarian: Ann Smith
vanillawoman2015@gmail.com

Committee Chairpersons 2025 - 2026

Communications Co-Chairs:
Christine Johnson *cejinmaine@gmail.com*
Erin May Deprez *erinmaydeprez@gmail.com*

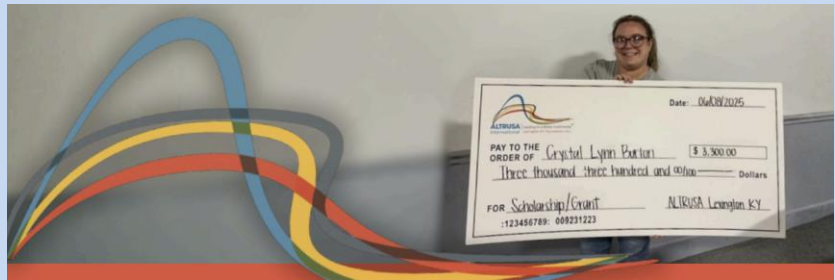
Finance Chairs:
Marie Pike *pikerino2@aol.com*

Membership Co-Chairs:
Patricia Maxim *campnaples@fairpoint.net*
Debbie Lemieux *dalemieux33@gmail.com*

Service Co-Chairs:
Martha Gross *grossmartha01@gmail.com*
Cathy Paglio *rpaglio1@gmail.com*

Program and Event Co-Chairs:
Anita Chandler *achandler@maine.rr.com*
Gail Mazzone *mestormy70@gmail.com*

Altrusa International News



As seen in the Altrusa International Foundation publication
February edition
The Impact
(excerpts below)

From Foundation Chair, Lavone Arthur,
"Your generosity and compassion make it possible for the Altrusa International Foundation to respond quickly and meaningfully through our Disaster Relief Aid, offering hope and help to communities when they need it most. Because of you, support reaches people not as an abstract promise, but as real, timely assistance. We are deeply grateful for the trust you place in the Foundation and for the care you extend to others through your giving."
Information about Disaster Relief Aid, including how to apply, is available on the Foundation website. <https://foundation.altrusa.org/>



Congratulations Cycle One Grants Program and Club 52 Grant Recipients!

The International Foundation awarded **\$95,061** to 37 Altrusa and ASTRA Clubs and three international healthcare organizations during Cycle One.

District One Recipients of Club 52 Grants

Altrusa International of Portland, Me. received \$600.00 for their Sue's Supper Project

Altrusa International of the Seacoast, Me. received \$2500.00 for their Essentials for Empowerment Project.

Congratulations

Altrusa International Foundation of Portland, Maine, Inc.

altrusaportland@gmail.com

PO Box 8834, Portland, ME 04104 USA

<https://districtone.altrusa.org> <https://www.altrusaportland.org>

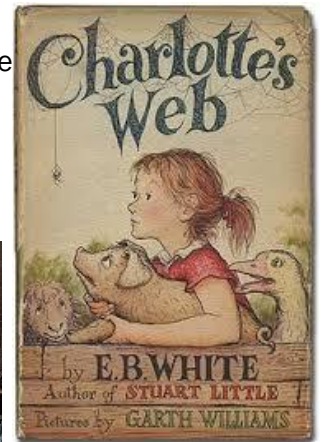
<https://www.altrusa.org>

Altrusa Portland Program Meeting Speakers

A passionate educator, Rebecca Cole shared with us her life-long journey with her love of books. She has shared that love with 1st graders at Windham Elementary for the last 30 years. She is so proud that her daughter is now following in her footsteps as an educator.

She spent much of her childhood years at her grandparents farm outside of Bethel, Maine. She compares her time there with a favorite childhood book, Charlotte's Web.

In addition to raising a family and nurturing 1st graders at Windham Elementary for the last 30 years, She is a member of the National Education Association and Maine Education Association. You can also find her at Books-A-Million in South Portland in some of her spare time. Oh, And she also sparks her creative abilities at the Biddeford City Theater.



We had a very special visitor from District One join us that evening, as well. Jodi Walencewitz is currently 1st vice governor. She drove up with her husband, from her home in Windham, Connecticut, to meet the club members, to tell us about herself and her journey that brought her to Altrusa. She also listened as we spoke of our many dear projects. She will have opportunity to see the Portland sites, taste all the yummy food and bring her report back to the District One board.



We had a healthy attendance at our monthly program meeting. Shown Lower right is Trish Maxim and her guest, Barbara Weese. Barbara is a retired educator and as such finds her passions align very well with Altrusa. She is interested in becoming an Altrusan.

From Left to Right:
Ann Nappi, Jodi Walencewitz, Karen Valley and Rebecca Cole

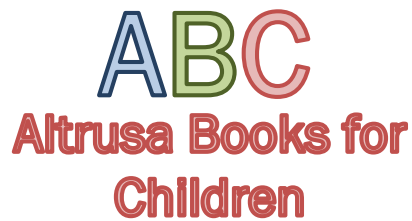


Service Committee News

A Note from our Foundation President and Service Cmte Co-Chair, Martha Gross

Special thank-you to Marie Pike and Pam Lemieux for writing up our Mamie Bass and Letha Brown Service Entry Awards for District One Conference to be held in May.

ABC will be visiting two schools in March.
Lyseth Elementary Tuesday March 24th @ 9:30
Presumpscot School Friday March 27th @ 9:30



2026 Scholarships

Maddie Elliot, Associate Director of Donor Relations @ University of Southern Maine Foundation and I are in communication regarding this year's scholarship awards.

I reassured her that Altrusa of Portland Maine will be sending a check of \$1500.00 to the University for a student in need of financial support.

Altrusa Portland awards College level scholarships on a 3 year cycle.

Southern Maine Community College	2025-2026
University of Southern Maine	2026-2027
University of New England	2027-2028

We are working toward selecting a vocational studies recipient for an \$800 scholarship before May 31, 2026.

But wait there's more.....

Altrusa Portland each year awards a \$500 scholarship to each of the following:

Alice Whittier Scholarship	- Portland High
Mary Stiles Scholarship	- Deering High
Connie Rickett Scholarship	- Casco Bay High
ASTRA Scholarship	- Lake Region High School ASTRA member

Committee News

From the Service Committee



Shamrock green cupcakes topped off the meal we prepared at the Ronald McDonald House on St Patrick's Day.

In addition to the cupcakes, the cooks (pictured left to right: Ann Smith, Karen Valley and Marie Pike) made a traditional corned beef and vegetables dinner, and Irish Soda bread.

Ronald McDonald House
Sue's Supper
Next Meal April 21
Contact Ann Smith to sign up



From the Finance Committee



The committee met on the 20th and put together a draft of the budgets for the 2026/2027 fiscal year. The board will review them and then they'll be presented to the club membership at the April 1 business meeting.

And just for advance notice: annual dues of \$125 will be required by June 1st. More details will be given next month.



March
Birthdays
of the Month

Christine Johnson

Happy Birthday!

Committee News

From the Membership Committee:

"Be a Friend - Bring a Friend" Altrusa International Membership Challenge

April 15 at 6 P.M. is our Volunteer of the Year Award Presentation and Membership Drive

All we are required to do is recruit as many new active members as we can from February 1st - April 30th. Then enter the names into Group Tally and be sure their dues are paid by April 30th. Their dues will be paid for 14 months, until June 2027.

The International Office will draw and announce 10 winning Clubs in the week of May 4th with each Club receiving \$100 to use for a membership event, a service project, or wherever it is most needed.

Let your Friends or people you meet "out and about" know about Altrusa, Give them a brochure and see if they'd like to learn more about us. Ask them if they'd like to accompany us on a Service event. Leave some brochures at a local library.

**Love Bigger
Lead Stronger
Leave a Legacy**



**2026 International
Membership Challenge**
February 1 – April 30, 2026

**Initiate new members
10 Clubs Win \$100!**

#LoveLiteracyLegacy
#AltrusaMembershipChallenge



WHY FOCUS ON Membership?

Without club members, we don't exist!

When a positive spirit is alive within our Altrusa clubs, we inspire our current members and our communities.... and when our communities are inspired by our service and our presence, we inspire new members.

It's a powerful cycle.

Members are our Club's Lifeblood
We must nurture and celebrate their contributions.



IDENTIFY: WEAR ALTRUSA GEAR

Logo gear and member pins are a simple yet powerful way for members to create a shared identity, purpose and connection, and showcase our Altrusa pride to the community.

SHARE THANKS, CELEBRATE SUCCESSES

Recognize member efforts and milestones each month or quarter. Spotlight members. Have members share favorite projects, committees and roles.

BE OPEN TO NEW IDEAS AND GROWTH

You'll build a more robust club if **all members are included**, feel welcome to provide input, get to actively contribute, have opportunities to grow personally, and don't hear "We don't do it that way."

OFFER MANY WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

Be flexible and innovative. **Members are available to participate in different ways in different seasons of life.** Offer opportunities for hands-on help, participation and planning from home, Zoom meeting participation, and day-night-weekend service opportunities.

HAVE FUN AT SOCIALS

Plan fun events and social activities that **unite your members** and allow them to get to know one another better outside of a meeting. Periodically include family and friends.

OFFER SUPPORT TO THE UNINVOLVED

Reach out to unengaged members to let them know you miss them and offer support, if needed. Invite them back to participate.

BE HAPPY AND CARE ABOUT YOUR MEMBERS

Have a positive club culture. A thriving culture is built upon a shared purpose, members who feel valued, and who enjoy using their personal talents to bring the club's vision to life.

MEMBER RETENTION STRATEGIES



Altrusa Portland Committee News

From the Membership Committee

PROSPECTIVE MEMBER, Barbara Weese, has completed her application for membership. Being a retired educator, she enjoyed our recent program meeting with Rebecca Cole as speaker. 16 Altrusans were in attendance. Barbara happened to sit next to member, Marie Pike, whose sister Kathy has been best friends with Barbara's daughter Kathy since their school days in the Bonnie Eagle school system. Currently, Marie's sister lives in Colorado (where Marie is headed to visit on the last days of March); and Barbara's daughter lives in Portland; but they still keep in touch regularly.



Barbara taught at Bonnie Eagle junior high from 1971 to 1993. Prior to that, she taught in Massachusetts and New York (totaling 30 years). During retirement Barbara has been living in Florida. She returned to Maine to live near her daughter. (She also has a son in Massachusetts.)

Trish met Barbara on a 'Seniors Bus Trip' in October through Woodfords Church; and gave Barbara an Altrusa brochure. Barbara was aware of Altrusa in Florida, but she was very busy volunteering for AARP. Trish & Barbara met again at the "Magic of Christmas" and then at Woodford's lunch and learn programs, where Barbara mentioned she was interested in Altrusa!

In Maine, Barbara continues to volunteer for AARP, and belongs to the Woodfords Club, and Cumberland County Retired Teachers (CCRE). She would like to join Altrusa because she relates to Portland Altrusa's activities and looks forward to participating.

Barbara plans to be at our next business meeting on April 1st, ready to pay her dues, if she is invited to become an Altrusan.

From the Nominating Committee

CONGRATULATIONS INCOMING OFFICERS

The following members were confirmed on March 4, 2026, as incoming officers for 2026 - 2028

Club President:	DEBBIE LEMIEUX
Vice President:	CHRISTINE JOHNSON
Secretary:	TRISH MAXIM
Treasurer:	PAMELA LEMIEUX
Club Director:	GAIL MAZZONE

They will be serving with:
Foundation President - Martha Gross - 2025-2027
&
Foundation Director- Cathy Paglio- 2025-2027



**A BIG Thank you to these members willing to serve
&
"Venture Outside Their Comfort Zone"**

Suggestion Corner

Clicking on this link will bring you to a Club Evaluation form.

This is your chance... The current Board and incoming Board appreciate and value your membership and want your opinions. Please click on this link to submit suggestions, comments, concerns and ideas, and **this is completely anonymous.**

We want to build a better, stronger club for you and by you..

<https://forms.gle/VNZWxzoQ6M93p1qh8>

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/1FAIpQLSfBA5kpTP2KnohBM77MIB7qwAm953glU10L8wCWanf3Qbrtqg/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 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