



April 2026 Altrusagram



Upcoming Dates

District One Conference

Sheraton Nashua

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

Business Meeting

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

Ronald McDonald House

Sue's Supper
Tuesday, May 19

Program Meeting Birthday Party and Installation

Wednesday, May 20
6:00 P.M.
North Deering Tavern
1349 Washington Ave,
Portland, Me.

Board/Cmte Chair Meeting

Wednesday, May 27
4:00 P.M.
Oak Room
Westbrook Community Center
426 Bridge St.
Westbrook, Me.

Business Meeting

Wednesday, June 3
location TBD

District One Workshop

Sunday, November 15
Nonantum Resort
95 Ocean Ave.
Kennebunkport, Me.

President's Message

Greetings, members and friends!

April is a Membership Drive Month for us! It has been another busy month for the Portland Club. We held our business meeting on April 1, 2026. No kidding, on April Fool's Day! But it was all business, no kidding around.

We welcomed Barbara Weese as a new member accepting her dues at the meeting. She will be initiated at the May 6th Business Meeting. Minutes were approved for the March 6th business meeting. There was a presentation of Budget Proposal for FY 2026-2027. Committee reports were given and plans reviewed for the Volunteer of the Year Award (VOY) and Membership Drive meeting that was held on April 15th at the North Deering Tavern in Portland. There is always a lively and eager discussion of our upcoming Service Projects. We ended with Unfinished and New business: Supporting Golf in the Stacks at Walker Memorial Library, our upcoming Yard Sale in June and noted we have two schools in Portland to finish up this year's ABC Service Project Program. And, of course, planning attendance at our District One Conference May 1-3, 2026. We hope to have 8-10 members attending.

The above is a glimpse of what a business meeting for our Club is like. So, if you're a friend reading this newsletter and it looks like something you might be interested in learning more about, contact one of our officers listed on the next page. Come and visit us in person. We love having guests at our meetings! Our membership this year is 31. To some that may seem small and to others large, but it really isn't about the numbers, although the more members we have, then the potential to do more increases! It's really about the volunteers who donate their time to run our Club, plan events and carry out those plans in our communities. It's about you, our members, and you, our friends. If you're interested in learning more, join us on a service project to see if it's what you're looking for as a volunteer.

May will be another busy month! We will vote for approval of a new FY 2026-2027 budget at the May 6th business meeting. And Party time!!! We'll be celebrating the 97th Birthday/Anniversary of our Club and also installation of our newly elected officers for 2026-2028 on May 20, 2026, to be held at North Deering Tavern in Portland, 6-8PM. Our regular business meeting space isn't available the first two weeks of June, so we chose to do the installation at the Program Meeting so as not to delay the ceremony. The new Board will preside over meetings starting June 1, 2026. The current committees will finish out this year through May 31, 2026. Annual reports are due May 31st and can be sent by email to me at book1babe@gmail.com and cc: the incoming President Debbie Lemieux at dalemieux33@gmail.com.

Portland Altrusans are Growing Better Together with Gratitude, showing Appreciation through our Kind Acts while Sowing Seeds of Change in our Communities.

Enjoy reading this newsletter!

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
franjensen2911@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 Chair:
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

Community News

We are excited to share some great news about another LITERACY organization. Article shared by Martha Gross



Dirigo Reads Named 2026 TDB2B 10K Beneficiary

We're excited to share some great news!

Dirigo Reads has been named the official nonprofit beneficiary of the 2026 TD Beach to Beacon 10K! As part of this partnership, TD Bank will donate **\$30,000** to help strengthen statewide literacy efforts across Maine.

Dirigo Reads is a volunteer-run, Maine-based organization with a simple and powerful mission: *to put new books into the hands of Maine's youngest readers*. During the school year, Dirigo Reads provides a brand-new book each month to first graders in Maine public schools—books kids can take home, keep, and love.

To date, Dirigo Reads has reached students in more than **100 schools across all 16 counties**, serving over **3,500 children**, or roughly **one-third of Maine's first graders**.

"Dirigo Reads is making a real difference in the lives of children across Maine," said Kate Burns, Retail Market President, New England North/South, TD Bank. "We are honored to recognize their important work by naming them as our 2026 race beneficiary."

In addition to TD Bank's \$30,000 donation, Dirigo Reads will benefit from fundraising opportunities connected to the race, including the **charity bib program**, and increased visibility through its association with one of Maine's premier sporting events.

"We are thrilled to be selected as the 2026 beneficiary," said Dirigo Reads co-founder and board president Dan Cashman. "This partnership will help us reach even more children across Maine and sustain our work for years to come."

And stay tuned—we'll be announcing race registration dates soon, when you can help support Dirigo Reads.



Altrusa International Foundation of Portland, Maine, Inc.

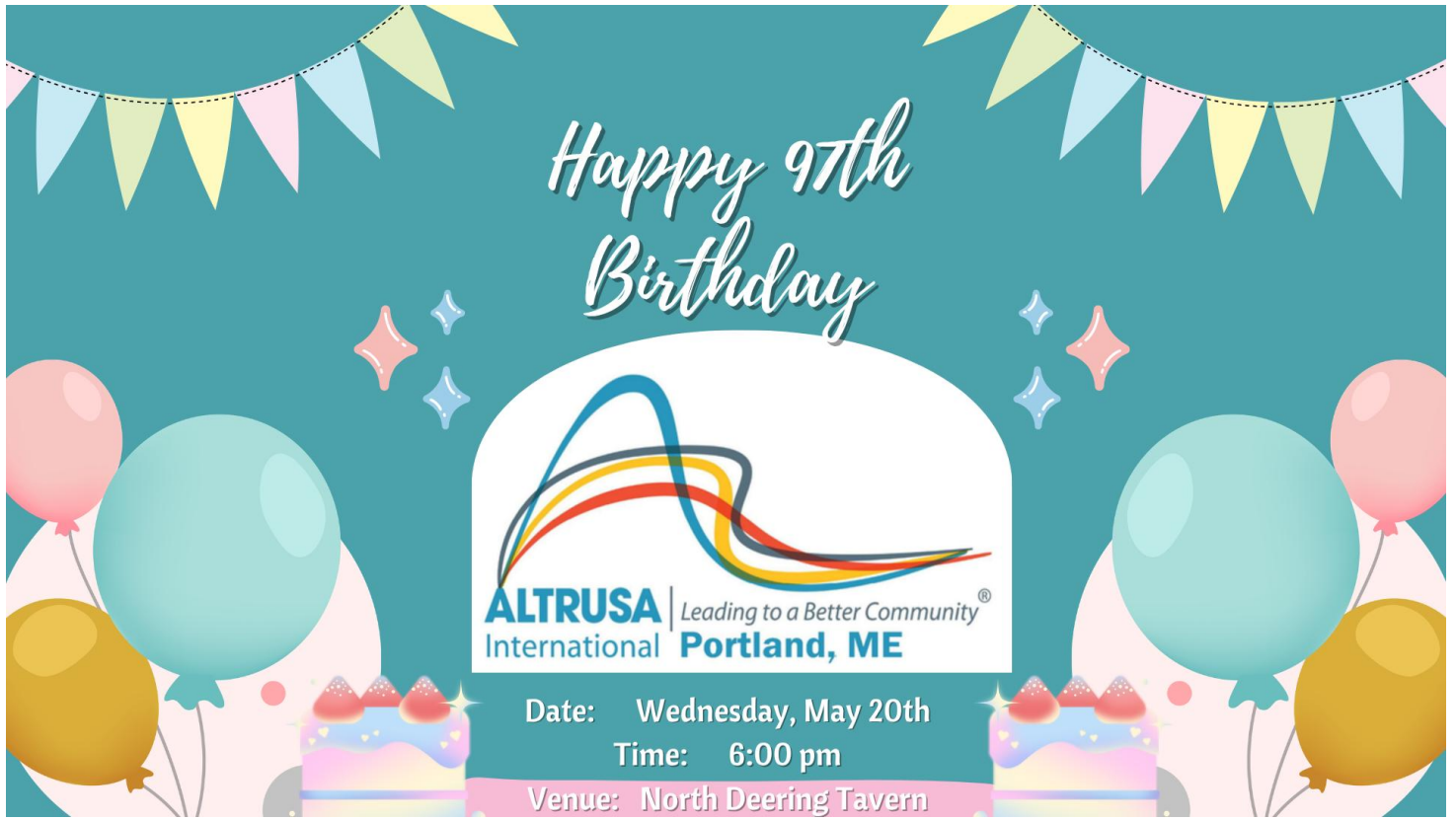
altrusaportland@gmail.com

PO Box 8834, Portland, ME 04104 USA

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

<https://www.altrusa.org>

Club News



Kindly RSVP by May 13th to Karen Valley at book1babe@gmail.com or (207) 756-5253

from the Membership Committee

Welcome Barbara Weese. We are very pleased to invite Barbara to become an Altrusan. She is already presenting as engaged, energized, sharing of ideas and ready to jump in.

Here is her BIO....

I am Barbara Weese, a former teacher at Bonny Eagle Middle School, living in Portland. I first heard about Altrusa while living in Leesburg, Florida. At the time I was very involved with an organization called Forward Paths which works with individuals tenuring out of foster care.

Moving back to Maine three years ago I was looking for a volunteer opportunity to work with young people. I met Trish Maxim who told me about the Altrusa club here. I became interested in being part of the activities they do. I am happy to have been invited to join and look forward to participating.



Altrusa Portland Membership Drive and Volunteer of the Year Award presentation



Check out the magic behind our red doors!

755 Main Street | Westbrook, ME 04092

Also, located at 75 Bacon St., Biddeford, ME

The 22nd Volunteer of the Year award was presented to Anita Johnston on April 15th to recognize her volunteer services for My Place Teen Center!

Volunteerism is the heart and soul of Altrusa. This is why we annually choose to honor one non-Altrusan volunteer who exemplifies the principle of service to his/her community.

This year we are pleased to announce that the person chosen as our 22nd Volunteer of the Year is Anita Johnston of Gorham, Maine.

Anita was nominated by Donna Dwyer, CEO of My Place Teen Center, for her invaluable service to that organization. My Place Teen Center is a year-round teen oasis that supports the needs of at-risk youth and their families. For seven years Anita has been part of this effort, helping with the Restaurant Job Training Program, mentoring the teens, preparing and delivering meals during Covid, fundraising, and advocating for the kids. Donna said of Anita that she relentlessly makes sure that kids' voices are heard and that those with the least receive the most she and her network can provide.

In addition to her volunteer work at My Place Teen Center, Anita shows her commitment to her community in many ways: building sets for high school musicals, helping neighbors, and volunteering with regional social service organizations for the past 40 years and much more. Anita Johnston leads by example. To honor Anita, we presented My Place Teen Center with a check for \$500 at an event celebrating volunteerism. In addition we have added her name to our permanent "plaque of honor" that lists every Volunteer of the Year since we initiated this award.



CEO at MPTC, Donna Dwyer spoke passionately about the impact this program has for at-risk teens. She also praised Anita Johnston's dedication to the program.



Above From Left to Right: Martha Gross, Anita Johnston, her husband and Karen Valley, President of Altrusa Portland.

There was a real check for \$500.00 donated to MPTC.



Right- Anita Chandler presents Anita Johnston(left) with her Volunteer of the Year Plaques.



19 in attendance for this award presentation.

Service Committee News

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

On Tuesday, April 21, I filled a request from Jane Curran, South Portland Food Pantry, at their new location. A library gave them some book shelves so they wanted to have children's books to share with families.

We gave them 25 books, met Jane and director Lauren and tentatively agreed to give them more books every other month, provided the need and our inventory.



South Portland Food Cupboard

April 21 at 12:50 PM · 🌐

...

Thank you to the [Altrusa International - Portland, Maine Club](#) for the donation of books to give out to our families! 📖

Altrusa International - Portland, Maine is a club of diverse individuals dedicated to providing service to our communities, focusing on literacy, fellowship and leadership development.



Martha Gross - Center.

A group of Altrusan read to 4 K-classes at Buxton on April 16.

Wanda read in two large classrooms at Buxton, While Martha read in 2 other classrooms. The kids were so engaged with comments and questions and cheered when they heard they could take home a book to keep.



Martha Gross reading to Kindergarteners at Buxton elementary.
Gail Mazzone taking photo.



Wanda Pettersen reading to Kindergarteners at Buxton elementary.
Fran Jensen taking photo.

Martha Gross reports that the 4 K-classrooms at Reiche school are in process of being scheduled.

ABC
Altrusa Books for Children

Committee News

From the Service Committee

Ronald McDonald House
Sue's Supper
Next Meal May 19
Consider being a Chef of the
Month
Contact Ann Smith to sign up



A few years ago, there was some discussion of ending Sue's Supper at Ronald McDonald House, primarily for financial reasons, but because I have always loved cooking there and meeting the families who depend upon the support we provide them during a particularly challenging time in their lives, I made continuing this activity my first priority as a Portland Altrusan.

Now, three years later, I have cooked many meals with other Altrusans, become good friends with the other volunteers for RMD House and an employee, Gail, who is great at helping me find tools in the kitchen. I have also learned what foods are eagerly consumed by the guests. People want the food that they would cook at home for their husbands and children. They don't want something with unusual ingredients or interesting new variations on traditional

Parents, grandparents, and siblings arrive back at RMD House each evening tired in body, mind, and heart, eager to eat something filling and familiar, so I have planned my menus accordingly.

Last night's supper, April 21, 2026, turned out to be a bigger challenge than usual because unbeknownst to me, the regular "double-sized" kitchen was unavailable! A new floor was being installed, so all meals had to be cooked in the auxiliary kitchen which is located in the new building next door to the first structure. It is not easily accessed, requiring that you climb up two flights to reach the first attached level and then down another to arrive at a kitchen with only one stove, very few cooking supplies, and one sink the size of a single kitchen sink. The desk staff had sent me two different emails warning me about this development, but I missed the first one (spam?) and the second arrived after I had checked my email that Tuesday.

Fortunately, thanks to my two helpers, President Karen Valley and new member, Kristina Kentigian, we produced a meal for 16+ people of ham, sliced turkey breast, home-made potato salad, and three-bean salad. We also supplied condiments and two large loaves of sandwich bread for take-away leftovers as well as something for the kids, red velvet cupcakes with cream cheese frosting. The Tuesday evening staff person, Gail, was a great help as well. I know she made many trips to assist us! Thank you, Gail.

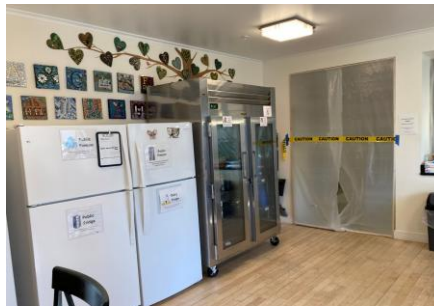
We were all really tired this time because we had to make quite a few trips up and down stairs to get bowls and extra utensils, but as you can see, the meal was ready when our guests arrived.

I want to thank all the Altrusans who have cooked Sue's Supper. A special thank you to Marie P. who applied for and received a grant from International which is providing a financial boost as well. Sue's Supper (named in honor of Susan E. King, a dedicated Altrusan who left us far too soon) is what Altrusa is all about, making the lives of families better! If you haven't joined us as a chef, please consider it! I would also love a partner in the direction of this very important service activity.

Ann Smith



L to R:
Ann Smith, Karen Valley, Kristina Kentigian



Construction Zone in the main kitchen
of the Ronald McDonald House



left - Kristina, right - Karen
Preparing the meal in the
auxiliary kitchen.

Committee News

More from the Service Committee

It is Spring and time to assemble the Milestone Bags of personal care items for the women as they leave Milestone Recovery.

For those new to this service project, Portland Altrusans, if you are able, are asked to donate a bag of personal care items which we give to Milestone Recovery Center which are given to women as they graduate from the program.

The Service Committee will provide the bags at the May 6th Business Meeting, and ask that you fill it with personal care items (see suggested list below) or you can bring your items to the May 6th meeting and put them in the bag provided. We will also collect the filled bags at the May 20th Program Meeting.

You are not required to put every item in the bag, but we are asking that you cover the first 9-10 items listedif you see something you want to include in your bag of personal care items, and it is not on the list, feel free to add it. However, **NO ITEMS CONTAINING ALCOHOL**

Empty bags will be available at the May 6th business meeting and return the full bag at the May 20th program meeting. The service committee will schedule a time to deliver these bags to Milestone Recovery for distribution.

Thank you for your continued support to this service project

From the Finance Committee

Budget vote coming up

The 2026/2027 proposed budget was presented at the April business meeting and will be discussed and voted on at the May 6th business meeting. If you would like another copy of it, or have any questions you'd like answered before that meeting, please call or email treasurer Marie P.

Time to downsize? Looking to clean out closets? Keep the Altrusa Yard Sale in mind!

The yard sale will be on **Saturday, June 27th** at Fran Jensen's yard in Westbrook. The finance committee will have a sign-up sheet with times that members can volunteer to work the sale. Fran will let everyone know when the time(s) are for dropping off things at her house before June 27th.

Please renew your membership - Altrusa appreciates you and all you do!

Dues are \$125 for the 26/27 fiscal year and due May 31st Please bring yours to a May meeting or mail them to the Altrusa P O Box or to incoming treasurer Pam Lemieux. (do not mail to outgoing treasurer Marie P because she'll be leaving mid-May for her summer home.) Any dues received after May 31st incur a late fee imposed by the International Association.

SUGGESTED PERSONAL CARE ITEMS FOR MILESTONE RECOVERY BAG

Shampoo
Conditioner (*Milestone noted that conditioner was very welcome because clients tend to have very dry hair.*)
Body Wash
Face cloth
Soap
Plastic soap container
Socks
Deodorant
Moisturizing Lotion
Toothpaste
Toothbrush(es)
Mouthwash (**WITHOUT ALCOHOL - VERIFY BEFORE YOU PURCHASE**)
Note: If you can't find it without alcohol, just leave it out.
Package of kleenex
Small First Aid Kit (**WITHOUT ALCOHOL SWABS**)
Nail Clippers / Files



April Birthdays of the Month

Erin Deprez
Trish Maxim
Cathy Paglio

Happy Birthday!



ASTRA of Lake Region High School

Ability
Service
Training
Responsibility
Achievement

"Earth Day" Clean-up on April 25 was held in Casco & Naples supported and attended by volunteers from Lake Region High School's ASTRA club.

shown below:
Katherine O'Connor ready to work



Phoebe Acosta-Afthim and Jolene Mei



From left to right:
ASTRAns - Jolene Mei, Katherine O'Connor, Phoebe Acosta-Afthim, and Altrusan - Trish Maxim



Shown left to right, ASTRA students:
Katherine O'Connor - President
Jolene Mei - Secretary
& Phoebe Acosta-Afthim

The next volunteer opportunity scheduled for ASTRA will be the Children's "Bike Rodeo" at the Crooked River Elementary School in Casco (CRES) grades 3 - 5) on Saturday, May 2nd, while many of our Altrusans will be away at District Conference in Nashua, N.H.



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 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

District One Workshop

Nonantum Resort
95 Ocean Avenue
Kennebunkport, Me.
Nov 15, 2026