

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

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Meetings

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

Presidential Prose

Dear Altrusans,

Spring has officially arrived—at least on the calendar! Whether the weather agrees or not, we're moving forward with renewed energy and plenty of Altrusa spirit.

We recently enjoyed wonderful camaraderie, and a delightful luncheon with the Joint. Many thanks to the Soroptimist Club for organizing such a lovely event—it's always nice to let someone else do the planning while we enjoy the company (and the food!).

Although we weren't able to reschedule our bunny pottery painting session, we'll keep our creative talents on standby and look forward to finding a new date soon. (I know many of you were ready to reveal your hidden artistic genius!)

It was great to gather at Pat's to **stuff bags for SAFFE**—and even better to have our soon-to-be member, Laurie, join us. She jumped right in, which tells me she already understands one important Altrusa truth: many hands make light work... and faster chatting!

Please plan to attend our **in-person meeting on April 8th**, where we will officially welcome Laurie Caraway into our Altrusa family. April is also *Add an Altrusan Month*, and we are right on target—so if you know someone who would enjoy service, fellowship, and a good laugh or two, bring them along!

Be sure to mark your calendars for the **Poetry Reception on Saturday, April 18th**. It's always a beautiful event—and a great reminder that many of our seniors are far more talented with words than we might be before our morning coffee.

As we look ahead, please begin summarizing your volunteer hours. I'll be preparing our **Club Annual Report** in May, and every hour counts—even the ones where we wondered, "How did we end up volunteering for this?" (And then had a great time anyway.)

(continued on page 3...)





- Apr 08 Business Meeting in-person at Wadsworth Glen at 6:30pm
- Apr 18 Senior Poetry Contest at 2pm Cromwell Belden Library 39 West St in Cromwell, CT
- Apr 22 Program Meeting TBD

SAVE THESE DATES:

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

District One Fall Workshop
November 14, 2026
Kennebunkport, ME

Altrusa International Convention
July 21–24, 2027
Columbus, Ohio



MEMBER MEETING

Breakfast
April– None scheduled

Events
April 30 – America 250 & Beyond: Market Intelligence in Age of AI at Courtyard by Marriott on 4 Sebethe Drive in Cromwell, CT from 1-5pm

Business After Work
April 9 –Toyota Oakdale Theatre on 95 South Turnpike Road in Wallingford. from 5:00 – 7:00pm



Altrusa Accent at Upcoming Meetings

- | | |
|---------|-----------------|
| April 8 | Lynne Havlicek |
| 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. 😊

Birthday Wishes

- | | |
|-----------------|----------|
| Pat Jackowski | April 2 |
| Kathleen Didato | April 3 |
| Cathy Boone | April 29 |



President's Prose (continued)

A quick reminder that **early bird registration for Conference in Nashua ends April 5th**, and the room block will be released on April 10th. If you're planning to attend, don't wait—register now before “I'll do it later” turns into “Oops, I missed it!”

April is a month of renewal, growth, and fresh beginnings. Like spring flowers, our club continues to bloom—sometimes in perfectly planned ways, and sometimes in wonderfully unexpected ones. Thank you for all you do to keep our club thriving, supportive, and full of heart (and humor).

With warm spring wishes,

Linda

President

SAFFE Returns

In honor of the United Nations March 8th International Women's Day, Altrusa International of Central CT resurrected our SAFFE Project (Sanitary Assistance for Females Everywhere).

SAFFE packets offers hygiene products: sanitary pads, tampons and personal wipes in a nondescript zippered bag. Woman can ask for a SAFFE packet from personnel without needing an explanation. Our hope is to provide needed hygiene items and maintain the dignity of women regardless of circumstance.

On March 25, 2026, members, Virginia Townes, Kathleen Didato, Laurie Caraway, Linda Ring and Pat Jackowski we gathered at the Jackowski home to put together SAFFE bags which were distributed locally to local middle and high schools and Hinka's Cupboard (Food Pantry through St. Francis Church) in Middletown.

Pat Jackowski



April Days of Observance for the United Nations

World Autism Awareness Day on April 2, promotes understanding and inclusion for autistic individuals. World Autism Acceptance Day is a global observance established by the United Nations in 2007 to promote understanding, dignity, and inclusion for autistic people. While often associated with awareness campaigns, the shift toward *acceptance* emphasizes listening to autistic voices, challenging stereotypes, and removing systemic barriers. The day sits within Autism Acceptance Month and encourages organizations to reflect on how their environments support or exclude neurodivergent individuals.

World Health Day on April 7, focuses on global health issues. It is celebrated annually and each year draws attention to a specific health topic of concern to people all over the world. April 7th marks the anniversary of the founding of WHO (World Health Organization) in 1948. The future will be shaped based on how we develop and practice science-led approaches for the health of all – not only humans, but also animals, plants, ecosystems and the entire planet – through the One Health approach.

Progress in public health is built on global solidarity and collaboration. WHO's ability to connect science with real-life practice in communities and countries around the world is powered through its network of 800 collaborating centers.

Earth Day on April 22, celebrates the importance of environmental protection.

Mother Earth is clearly urging a call to action. Nature is suffering. Oceans filling with plastic and turning more acidic. Extreme heat, wildfires and floods, have affected millions of people.

Climate change, man-made changes to nature as well as crimes that disrupt biodiversity, such as deforestation, land-use change, intensified agriculture and livestock production or the growing illegal wildlife trade, can accelerate the speed of destruction of the planet.

That is why we need to recover our ecosystems. Ecosystems support all life on Earth. The healthier our ecosystems are, the healthier the planet - and its people. Restoring our damaged ecosystems will help to end poverty, combat climate change and prevent mass extinction. But we will only succeed if everyone plays a part.

For this International Mother Earth Day, let's remind ourselves - more than ever - that we need a shift to a more sustainable economy that works for both people and the planet.

Did you know...

The planet is losing 10 million hectares of forests every year – an area larger than Iceland. A healthy ecosystem helps to protect us from diseases. Biological diversity makes it difficult for pathogens to spread rapidly.

It is estimated that around one million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction.

Let's promote harmony with nature and the Earth. Join the global movement to restore our world!

Pat Jackowski

Altrusa Accent from business meeting on March 11, 2026 (by Hilda Schmidt)

World Water Day (celebrated annually on March 22) is a United Nations observance that highlights the importance of freshwater and raises awareness about the global water crisis, including the 2.1 billion people living without safely managed drinking water services. The day supports Sustainable Development Goal 6, which aims for water and sanitation for all by 2030.

The theme “Where water flows, equality grows” focuses on water and gender equality, emphasizes the link between water access and gender equality. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by water-related challenges due to social norms, limited infrastructure, and systemic inequalities. The campaign calls for a rights-based approach where women have equal voice, leadership, and opportunities in water decision-making, making water a force for a healthier, more prosperous, and gender-equal future.

The campaign is coordinated by UN-Water, with leadership from UNICEF and UN Women, supported by a task force of over 30 UN-Water members and partners. The UN also releases the World Water Development Report aligned with the campaign theme, providing policy recommendations and raising global awareness.

World Water Day 2026 encourages everyone to recognize water as a human right, take action to address inequalities, and contribute to sustainable water management for a more equitable and resilient world.

Where water flows, equality grows: The global water crisis affects everyone—but not equally. Where people lack safe drinking water and safe sanitation close to home, inequalities flourish, with women and girls bearing the brunt.

- They collect water.
- They manage water.
- They care for people made sick by unsafe water.
- They lose time, health, safety, and opportunities

And too often, the systems that govern water leave women and girls out of decision-making, leadership, funding and representation. This makes the water crisis a women’s crisis. We need a transformative, rights-based approach to solving these challenges, where women’s voices are heard and their agency recognized. All women must be equitably represented at all levels of water leadership – helping design every pipe and policy. And women must drive change in water as engineers, farmers, scientists, sanitation workers and community leaders.

As we face growing risks, from a changing climate and water-related disasters to financing shortfalls, from social norms to governance gaps, we need everybody to play their full part: managing water as a common good and building resilience for the future. This includes engaging men and boys as allies in promoting safe water, sanitation and hygiene for all, and in challenging the norms and behavior that hold women and girls back.

Only then can safe water services meet everyone’s needs – empowering women and girls to lead healthier, more fulfilled lives – and making water a force for sustainable development and gender equality that benefits us all.

SAVE THE DATE



Middletown Kids Health & Safety Day!

Saturday, May 16, 2026
10 AM - 2 PM
Main Street, Middletown, CT



Middletown Kids Health & Safety Day

Get ready...Set...Go! The Club is signed up and plans are coming together to make this year's event a success. The Middletown Kids Health & Safety Day – May 16, 2026 from 10 AM to 2 PM. We will again, distribute children's books to children/families attending the event. Last year, we gave away 286 books and currently have over 300 books in our inventory. The plan is to have books sorted into 3 categories – Board Books, Children's Books and Chapter Books. On Wednesday March 25th, Linda Ring, Kathleen Didato, Laurie Caraway, and Virginia Townes assisted in sorting and labeling books at my home in preparation for the giveaway. There will be more information provided at our business meeting April 8th so mark your calendars and plan on attending and assisting at this upcoming literacy event!

Pat Jackowski

Highlights from Business Meeting Minutes of March 11, 2026

- **Altrusa Accent** – Hilda Schmidt
United Nations World Water Day – “Where water flows, equality grows”
Full content will be in the April Central Breeze.
- **General Business** – Linda Ring
 - March Elections (not necessary – as we all agreed to 2-year terms)
There is an opening for Vice-President because of Liz’s resignation.
 - Delegates to District One Conference
Motion to designate Pat J. and Hilda S. as delegates to District One Conference.
Motion – Kathleen D. Second – Suzanne M. In favor – All
 - District One Workshop will be held on Saturday November 14, 2026, at the Nonantum Resort in Kennebunkport, ME. Room rate \$249.00 inclusive price with Saturday breakfast.
 - Name Tags (I’m placing an order on Friday – if anyone needs a new name tag, let me know)
 - Linda R. is having foot and ankle reconstruction surgery on May 14th. This is a two-year process. We will be holding many meetings over Zoom. Linda will need our support through this trying time.
- **Membership** – Linda Ring
 - Liz Brantley Resignation
 - Pickup returnable bottles and cans from Luther Ridge?
Linda and Pat will do bottle pickups. Looking for assistance in cashing them in.
 - Laurie Caraway Application
 - Initiation planned at April Business meeting at Wadsworth Glen.
- **Painting Pots Social** – Pat Jackowski
This was cancelled due to a snowstorm. Linda R., Elsie M., Hilda S., Suzanne M., Virginia T., will join Pat J. on March 25 to do an Easter Bunny craft. Sue W. would still like to host.
- **Baby Food and Diaper Drive** – Kathleen Didato
Received donations – 200 from Maria Ambrose, 100 from Joe Carta and 90 from Sylvia. (390 total)
Kathleen reports that she is making more connections for collaborations. Officer Bloom from MPD will be a contact for families in need.
- **HS Senior Community Service Award** (presentation on Wednesday, May 27) – Elsie Mathews, Lynne Havlicek
Elsie has received our first application, a member of the Honor Society and VITA volunteer.
Lynne reported that our press release was printed in the Rare Reminder but not by The Cromwell Chronicle. Elsie and Lynne will organize the May 27th Reception.

Lynne Havlicek

Another Win!

Altrusa has been collecting baby food, diapers and formula for 36 + years. And while we know we are making a difference, sometimes we get a bird's eye view of what we accomplish and it puts a smile on our faces and a reason to continue the "Hungry Babies Are Not An Illusion Project." Brenda Riley, manager of Amazing Grace Food Pantry, phoned me to tell me she needed Sizes 6 and 7 diapers. Great, no problem. Had them ready to deliver. A half hour later, Brenda messaged me and said she has a mother with a beautiful baby in her arms who needs this particular formula. It's specially formulated for babies with colic and allergies due to protein sensitivity. This one was new to me. I checked with drug store and checked Amazon who said they could ship it for tomorrow. Perfect. Each 19oz. can is \$58.00! Thanks to our generous donors, we have the money to buy this. I ordered 4 and delivered both diapers and formula to Amazing Grace who immediately called the mother. A lot of gratitude to go around. I will make sure that a few of our regular donors know of this particular need and the help they gave to make this possible.

Kathleen Didato

P.S. Anyone who has been to the loading area of Amazing Grace knows the concrete goes downhill. Suffice it to say that Brenda is positioned at the high side and I...am not. Lol.



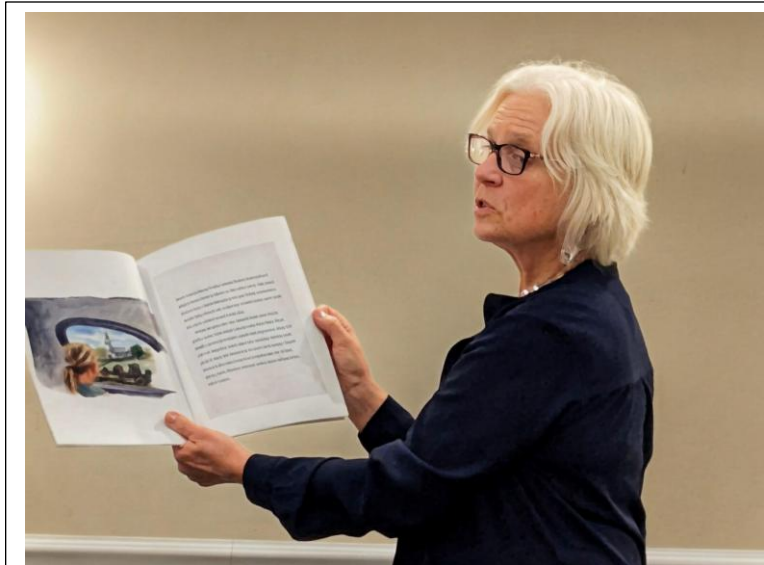
Joint Service Club Luncheon

On March 07, 2026 the Altrusa International of Central CT, Alpha Delta Kappa Beta, Civitan Club of Middletown, and the Soroptimists of Central CT clubs gathered for a joint luncheon in Berlin, CT. The presidents of each group presented a synopsis of their club/activities. After lunch, Guest speaker and author Joanne Moore of the Soroptimist club discussed and read one of her recent children's books. A good time was had by all.



Elsie Mathews

Altrusa attendees: Left to right are Hilda Schmidt, Elsie Mathews, Lynne Havlicek, Pat Jackowski, Linda Ring and Ralph Ring.



Guest Speaker: Joanne Moore

Poetry Contest Reception

The Annual Gerard F. Melito Poetry Contest Reception is scheduled for April 18 at 2:00 pm at the Cromwell Belden library on West Street in Cromwell. We will need a few volunteers to set up the room for the reception and to man the registration table.

I will be soliciting volunteers and refreshments at our next meeting. We typically serve finger food desserts or savory items, decaf coffee, tea and water.

Set up will begin at 12:30pm and includes the following:

- Set up tables with beverages and refreshments. One table for beverages, water, Coffee, teapot, cream, sugar, cups, spoons.
- Two tables for desserts and other refreshments.
- Set up Altrusa Display
- Set up registration table—nametags, sharpies, list of registered poets and guests, donation jar.

Poetry Book Update

The Poetry Book is prepared and out with our judges for review. We have 30 submissions this year... with several new poets! We're happy to welcome Ashley Raithel as a new judge for this year. She is a Professor of English and Coordinator for the Center for Civic Engagement at CT State Community Colleges-Middlesex.

Cathy Boone and Linda Ring

April 11th is Altrusa's Anniversary! 109 years and going strong!

April is also Add an Altrusan month... so



Senior Award 2026

A letter announcing our \$1,000 award for a high school senior (s) in Central CT was sent to 11 local high schools.

The applications are trickling in at this time.

The deadline for application submissions is April 15, 2026. The award committee will review and score the completed applications received. The winner(s) will be invited to a reception with our Altrusa club on May 27, 2026.

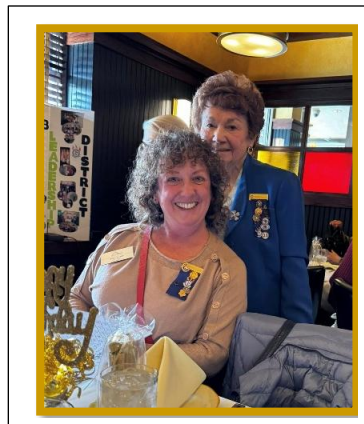
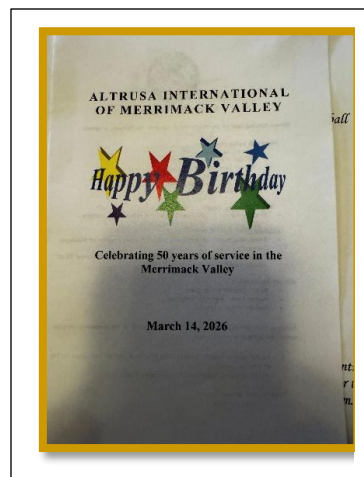
Elsie Mathews

Merrimack Valley Altrusans Celebrate their 50th Anniversary!

A group of Altrusans from the Central CT, Portland, ME and Northeastern CT clubs gathered together to celebrate the 50th Birthday of the [Altrusa International of Merrimack Valley](#), MA.

3 Guests spoke of Altrusa of Merrimack Valley's longtime projects and contributions to their community: Nashua Soup Kitchen and Shelter, Alternative House and the Veterans Community Center.

Happy Birthday and here's to 50+ more years of Service!





District One President's March Meeting Notes

- Confirmations were emailed to all clubs who submitted projects for District Awards
- Spring Conference 2026 – Lighting the Way for Leadership. Registrations are coming in slowly. If you are planning to attend, please register soon. *The early bird discount ends on April 5th. The room block will be released on April 10th.*
- Be prepared to submit your Club Activity Report. Start summarizing Volunteer Hours (we always under-estimate how much time we DO spend on community activities.) *Remember to report ALL volunteer hours... time spent on club administration, club activities, meetings, etc. AND include other volunteer work you do when you mention to someone else about Altrusa. It all counts!*
- Merrimack Valley member, Claire Behrle's son works for the Portland (ME) SeaDogs. He reports that they traditionally send out tickets to many clubs looking for prizes for fundraisers. *(I wonder if that's too far away to include in our raffle? What do you think?)*
- Jenn Belcher, Plymouth County, asks if District has considered any online payment option for dues. (Think PayPal, Venmo, Zelle, etc.) It eliminates tracking paper checks and mail delays.
- Newer members are asking what it takes to be a club or District Treasurer. *It was suggested that an article be submitted to the DSB with thoughts from our recent treasurers.*
- Does District ever fundraise for operating funds? *Generally, the proceeds from the 50/50 and silent auction at conference goes first toward the Gaby Award (A Lamplighter = \$500 donation to Altrusa International Foundation) District does make some money with sales of District Pins (the emblem with 3 country flags), and other goods, but not a whole lot.*
- What do other districts do to help defray the cost of putting on conference?
 - *Sell ads in program*
 - *Solicit sponsors (to pay for printing the conference program, or speaker's stipend)*

Linda

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.

ASTRA - Kindness Postcard Day

March 2026



Please join me in supporting our ASTRA Clubs worldwide with their new global ASTRA service project...ASTRA - Kindness Postcards Day. On April 7th, ASTRA members will create postcards with messages of kindness to share with hospitals, senior centers, schools and community service workers.

How Can You Get Involved? All Altrusa Clubs (regardless of whether you sponsor an ASTRA Club or not) are welcome to join ASTRA in spreading kindness. Simply show support of this global project for ASTRA by sharing postcards of encouragement to make a positive impact; one message at a time. Even one postcard can brighten someone's day. Maybe consider sending a postcard to an ASTRA Club to cheer them on and show our support by building up future leaders. Take a moment to read the attached flyer and see what you can do as either a club and/or as an individual to spread joy because... **KINDNESS MATTERS.**

With Altrusa Love,

Chris

ASTRA – KINDNESS POSTCARDS DAY
April 7, 2026
A global day of creativity, compassion, and connection

Join ASTRA clubs around the world in a kindness movement!

Students everywhere will come together to design postcards of encouragement and share them with people who could use a little extra light in their day. Clubs will also exchange digital postcards internationally, building bridges of empathy and youth leadership across borders.

Who will receive the kindness?

- Hospitals
- Elderly homes
- Schools
- Community service workers
- Others

Why participate?

- Spread kindness in your local community
- Build global friendships
- Celebrate creativity and youth leadership
- Make a positive impact-one postcard at a time

Altrusa Clubs—join ASTRA in spreading kindness! Support this global project by sharing postcards of encouragement and helping make a positive impact, one message at a time.

Open to all ALTRUSA & ASTRA clubs worldwide

Register by March 15, 2026 Information: altrusa.org
ASTRA - Kindness Postcard Day Registration Form link: <https://forms.gle/hQnMyt1A4QnE7Jqv5>
Let's fill the world with color, encouragement, and connection.

ASTRA – KINDNESS POSTCARDS DAY
April 7, 2026
A global day of creativity, compassion, and connection



Kindness Postcard Guidelines

As ASTRA members, and as part of the Altrusa family, your words are an act of service. This Kindness Postcard is a simple yet meaningful way to uplift others, lead with compassion, and reflect our mission of service—one heartfelt message at a time.

Postcard Size:

- 4 x 6 inches (recommended)
- 5 x 7 inches

Front – Design Side

- Positive images or drawings, stickers
- Bright, readable colors
- A kindness theme (hearts, hands, globe, smiles, nature, stars)

Back – Message Side

- One short, positive message
- Optional: "From ASTRA Club of ____"
- No last names or contact info

Messages: Use these messages as inspiration. Be creative, speak from your heart, and share kindness in your own words.

- "You matter"
- "One World, One Heart"
- "Small Acts, big Change"
- "Eres especial"
- "Hoy alguien piensa en ti"

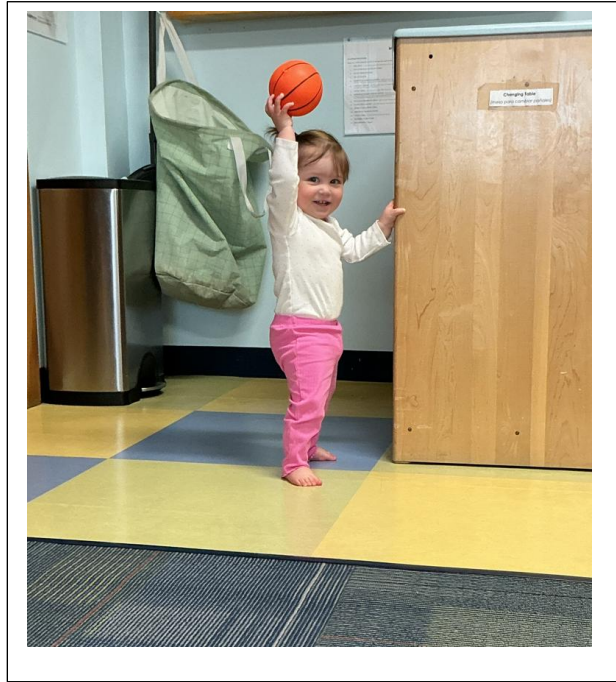
Handmade or Digital - All formats are welcome!

Visual Example

FRONT (Design Side)	BACK (Message Side)
<p>■ YOU MATTER ■ (Drawings / Art) ■■■■</p>	<p>"Small acts of kindness can make a big impact."</p> <p>With care, ASTRA Club of ____</p>

Your postcard may be small, but your message can brighten someone's day.

KENNEDY'S
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