

LITERACY ALLSORTS

Selection of Project:

President Lorraine, at her Installation, challenged her committees to initiate and develop small literacy projects.

After brainstorming, it was apparent that the ultimate goal would be to span the diverse range of ages in our community. With each committee having involvement in an individual project, all members would be able to contribute in various ways.

So, **Literacy Allsorts** was born!

Altrusans are always on the lookout for people or organizations to assist with a helping hand. Everyday conversations are often probed for possible service ideas, which is how the following projects came about -

- **Booster Bags for Boys**
- **Books for Heart Kids**
- **Reading to Preschool Children**
- **Sharing Stories with the Elderly**
- **Memory Books for Dementia Patients**
- **Book Give Away on International Children's Day**

Development and Implementation of the Project:

Individual committees were responsible for planning, developing and executing their project. It became obvious that some projects required little or no financial assistance and others involved considerable expense.

Fundraising: The club then ran a “Christmas is Coming” event which funded all our literacy needs.

8 months in the planning! 281 tickets sold! 37 stalls selling Christmas treats and gifts!

23 members involved on the night! 200 hours of member’s time!

\$4827 raised for our *Literacy Allsorts* projects!

The **Literacy Committee**, responding to a need at a local school developed **Booster Bags for Boys**, aimed at reluctant boy readers.

Fabric was purchased and bags made at a Saturday workshop by several members with sewing skills. Each bag contained a nonfiction book, crayons or felts plus a colouring book. The aim was to make it easy, fun and encourage the love of reading.



These were subsequently presented to the boys in their classroom with members of Altrusa present. The whole room seemed to spontaneously erupt in the most joyful way when 27 little boys were “wowed” by their gift. The plan was to rotate the books, but the bag and other contents were theirs to keep.

Using extra funds raised through a small raffle, the **Communications Committee** purchased books, colouring books and pencils to be included in the kits provided by **Heart Kids South Canterbury** for children having to travel all the way to Starship Hospital for surgery. Representatives of Heart Kids attended our meeting to speak about their work and to receive our contributions. Little Heidi was delighted to show us the scar which made her all better.



ABC Learning teachers, from a low decile preschool, visited our club to speak of their need of funding for their 'in house' lunches, but also shared the need to feed the brain as well as the tummies of children who are not often exposed to books at home.

Membership Committee members focused on this latter need, visiting the preschool to read to the children during International Literacy month.



The **Service Committee** decided to pursue their Literacy goal in the more senior area of the community. With South Canterbury being rich in farming history, they chose to read stories of well-known local women to the residents of a **Rest Home** in Timaru. The experiences of pioneering women revealed in the stories resonated with the elderly residents.

Initiated again by the **Literacy Committee** and developed as a 'hands on' club project, **Memory Books** were constructed for our local Dementia Units. Fourteen Altrusans were present on the day to construct the Memory Books, however many members had spent their January collecting and cutting out suitable pictures for the workshop.



Through our local newspaper and our Facebook page there was an influx of magazine and calendar donations from South Canterbury residents which provided the materials for 30 + themed books.

We hope our books will spark a conversation, spark a memory, create an interest or a talking point for visitors, or simply give people something to do.

As our community celebrated **International Children's Day**, we took this opportunity to promote literacy by **giving away over 900 new and pre-loved books**. This was also an opportunity to raise the profile of Altrusa in our community.

For months before the event, members were encouraged to collect and donate books. Charity shops, book sales, library sales and member donations were all good sources. This project was aimed at families with children from infants to 10 year olds where parents need to be encouraged to spend quality time with their children over a good book. Our Altrusa book stall sat comfortably among the other activities offered during the day.



Evaluation

The original objectives of our **Literacy Allsorts** were met by spanning the generations of our community.

Through regular inclusion of our activities in the media, Facebook and the District Fifteen Service Bulletin, Altrusa's commitment to Literacy was very evident.

The benefits to the community are difficult to quantify but we do know -

- There were 27 little boys who were excited and tuned in to their reading the day we delivered their booster bags
- On International Children's Day 450 children left happily with a book in each hand
- Many memory impaired residents of South Canterbury will enjoy our Memory Books
- And young and old alike enjoyed being read to

YMCA, a local school and Church all supported these projects by donating the use of tools, e.g. laminators, and gifting supplies e.g. paper.

Without a doubt, with the variety and size of these projects, all members contributed extensively with their time and talents.

Bonds of friendship were heightened within the membership while working as a team on the varied **Literacy Allsorts** projects.

The hours spent on **Literacy Allsorts** is incalculable, however the following table records these to date, with some projects still on going. All members were involved in at least one project.

Member Numbers & Hours -		
Project	Members Involved	Hours
Booster Bags for Boys	12	28
Books for Heart Kids S.C.	5	20
Reading to Preschoolers	2	4
Sharing Stories with the Elderly	2	2
Memory Books	22	200
Books on the Bay Childrens' Day	12	37.5
Total Hours		291.5