



District Fifteen

42nd Conference

2026

Copthorne Hotel

Wellington

May 2nd and 3rd

Conference Book



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Thank You for Your Support



**Altrusa International of District Fifteen
sincerely thanks the Aotearoa Gaming Trust
for their generous support of our
2026 District Conference**

National Anthem of New Zealand

E-ihoā Atua
O ngā iwi mātou rā
Āta whakarongona
Me aroha noa
Kia hua ko te pai
Kia tau tō atawhai
Mana-a-kiti-a mai
Aotearoa

God of Nations, at Thy feet
In the bonds of love we meet
Hear our voices we entreat
God defend our freeland.
Guard Pacific's triple star
From the shafts of strife and war
Make her praises heard afar
God defend New Zealand

Karakia Timatanga

(starting prayer)

Tuia i runga
Tuia i raro
Tuia i waho
Tuia i roto
Tuia te here tangata
Ka rongō to pō
Ka rongō te ao
Haumi e
Hui e
Tāiki e!

Unite from above
Unite from below
Unite from outside
Unite from within
Unite to connect people
The night hears
The day hears
United
Together
As one!

Altrusa Grace

For this food before us spread
For our steps in safety led
For thy favour on our way
Lord accept our thanks today.

Altrusa Benediction

May we go forth with high ideals
To greet our fellow man
Be true to all Altrusan aims
Until we meet again.

Karakia Whakamutunga

(closing prayer)

E te Atua
Tēnei te mutunga
Kua mutu to roanga
Kua mutu to kaha
Kua mutu to mahi nei
Kua pai
Haumi e
Hui e
Tāiki e!

Let the universe know
This is the end
The long journey is done
The effort is finished
The work is done

Conference Rules

The following Rules of Order, based on the District Fifteen By-Laws, shall be observed at all Business Meetings at the Annual Conference:

1. The voting body shall consist of the District Officers, Past District Governors and accredited delegates.
2. All votes shall be cast in person. No vote by proxy shall be permitted.
3. A majority of registered members who are entitled to vote shall constitute a quorum and the act of the majority shall be the act of the members of District Fifteen.
4. Delegates shall wear the Delegates badge at Business Sessions and must sit in the section reserved for the voting members. Alternates may vote in the absence of delegates, and in this case must sit in the voting section and wear an Alternate badge. A registered Alternate may, upon clearance from the Credentials Chair, be transferred from Alternate to Delegate at any time during the continuance of Business Meetings.
5. Only members of the voting body may introduce motions and vote, but all registered members may participate in the discussions.
6. Discussion is limited to two minutes for each speaker. No-one may speak twice on the subject until all who wish to speak have had the opportunity. The maker of the motion shall have one minute for right of reply to end discussion. Discussion time for each agenda item is restricted to 20 minutes and individual speakers to two minutes.
A motion for extension of time must be made within the original 20 minutes.
7. All main motions shall be presented in writing, signed by the mover and given to the District Secretary before the close of the session.
8. No motions shall be required for accepting reports of officers or chairpersons, unless there are recommendations.
9. No report of a committee which has not been presented to the Conference body shall be printed in the minutes.
10. Members shall be in their seats at least three minutes before the scheduled business meeting time.
11. Parliamentary procedure, as followed in New Zealand, shall govern the Conference in all cases in which it is not consistent with the Bylaws of District Fifteen and these Standing Orders.
12. All cell phones must be switched off in all meetings and official functions.

Conference Information

Key To Colours

Past & Current Governors	Blue
District Board Members	Yellow
District Chairs	Green
Delegates	Pink
Alternates	Cream
First Timers	Badges
International Representative	Red

REGISTRATION & CREDENTIALS DESK

The registration & credentials desk is located opposite the Reception area on the 7th Floor of the Copthorne Hotel - as you come out of the lifts - as follows:

Friday	May 1	12 noon - 5pm
Saturday	May 2	8.30am - 8.55am

Delegates and Alternates should be registered at the Registration and Credentials Desk. Only those who have been confirmed as Official Delegates by the Credentials Chair may vote.

The Credentials Desk is in the same area as the registration desk and will be open at the same times.

Foundation Raffle

Tickets will be available for sale at the Registration and Credentials Desk.

Winners will be announced at breakfast on the Sunday morning.



Greetings from the International President



International Board Members

Christine DeVlieger
International President

Kitty McElhaney
President Elect

Penny Daugherty
Vice President

Lisa Boyd
Treasurer

Linda K. Smith
Immediate Past President

Tammy Boyd
International Director

Ingrid Christianson
International Director

Jennifer Gatlin
International Director

Debbie McBee
International Director

Ex-Officio Member

David Mena
Executive Director

Foundation Representative

LaVone Arthur

International Board Consultants

Patricia A. Woodward, JD
Legal Advisor

Colleen M. Duris, PRP
Parliamentarian

Brenda Smith
BRR Chair

1400 E. Touhy Ave.
Suite 410
Des Plaines, IL 60018
Telephone: 312-427-4410

altrusa@altrusa.org
www.altrusa.org

Dear Altrusans,

What an exciting moment for your District — and what a joy to welcome you to your 2026 District Conference. Gatherings like this are the heartbeat of Altrusa. They remind us why we serve, why we lead, and why this organization continues to make a meaningful difference in communities around the world.

Conference weekends have a special energy. They give us space to learn from one another, exchange ideas that spark new possibilities, and strengthen the friendships that make our work so rewarding. They also give us a chance to celebrate what you've accomplished and to focus on the important business that keeps your District moving forward. Most of all, they give us time to simply enjoy being together as Altrusans.

Your District Board, host club(s), and Conference Committee have poured tremendous effort into creating an experience that is both inspiring and practical. You can look forward to thoughtful speakers, workshops that expand your skills, and plenty of opportunities to connect with fellow members who share your passion for service.

I encourage you to spend time with your Altrusa International Representative during the weekend. She is here not only to share updates from the international level, but also to listen — to your ideas, your questions, and your hopes for the future of your clubs. We value your voice, and we want to support the work you're doing to strengthen your communities for generations to come.

On behalf of the International Board, I hope this weekend leaves you renewed, energized, and ready to carry the spirit of Altrusa back to your club. Travel safely, enjoy every moment, and share what inspired you when you return home. Together, we continue this biennium with purpose and heart under the theme Love, Literacy & Legacy.

With Altrusa Love,

Christine DeVlieger

Christine "Chris" DeVlieger
International President
Altrusa International, Inc.

Greetings from the Executive Director



International Board Members

Chris DeVlieger
International President

Kitty McElhaney
President Elect

Penny Daugherty
Vice President

Lisa R. Boyd
Treasurer

Linda K. Smith
Immediate Past President

Tammy Boyd
International Director

Ingrid Christianson
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Jennifer D. Gatlin
International Director

Debbie McBee
International Director

Ex-Officio Member

David Mena
Executive Director

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Colleen M. Duris, PRP
Parliamentarian

Brenda Smith
BRR Chair

Welcome to 2026 District Conferences!

Last year I had the pleasure of attending District Five Conference in Akron, OH. It was informative, educational, and fun. I was given the opportunity to interact with Altrusans I had not yet had the pleasure of meeting. It's always special meeting Altrusans because our members have a special way of inspiring the world around them. My time at District Five Conference was exactly as I imagined District Conferences to be, and I encourage you to experience your own district's conference, as well.

I would also like to express my gratitude for all District Governors and every Altrusan involved in making Conferences memorable and successful. Substantial work goes into events such as these and having experienced a District Conference and several Altrusa International Conventions, I have a huge appreciation for everyone involved.

Enjoy Conferences!

David Mena

David Mena
Executive Director

1400 E. Touhy Ave.
Suite 410
Des Plaines, IL 60018
Telephone: 312-427-4410

altrusa@altrusa.org
www.altrusa.org

Greetings from the Foundation Chair



Board of Trustees

LaVone Arthur
Chair

Shannon Schell
Vice Chair and Education,
Development and Marketing Trustee

Melanie Hodges
Finance Chair

Anne Condran
Education, Development, and
Marketing Chair

Dorothy Bowen
Grants Chair

Jane Hart
Immediate Past Finance Chair

Sherral L. Nelson
Anna H. Settle Community Leadership
Award Chair and Grants Trustee

Karen Robinson
Immediate Past Foundation Chair and
Wilma B. Hogan Enduring Community
Project Award Chair

Connie Stoker
Finance Trustee

Ex Officio Members

Martha Hardwick-Hofmeister
Legal Advisor

Kitty McElhaney
Association Representative

Kantrice R. Rose, Ph.D.
Executive Director

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www.foundation.altrusa.org

Welcome to District Conference!

Conference is an exciting time when we come together to fully experience the spirit of Altrusa—connecting with friends, making new ones, learning about impactful service projects, sharing ideas, and discovering more about the Foundation.

The **Altrusa International Foundation, Inc.** is a nonprofit organization operated exclusively for charitable purposes. It was created to support Altrusans like you in your service to local communities around the world. Governed by a Board of Trustees elected by the Altrusa membership, the Foundation funds impactful initiatives through the generosity of members worldwide.

What Your Foundation Supports:

- **Grants** to fund local club projects
- **Awards and Scholarships** to recognize and support service and leadership, including the Letha H. Brown Literacy Award, Mamie L. Bass Service Award, Dr. Nina Fay Calhoun International Relations Award, ASTRA Service Awards and ASTRA Scholarships, Anna H. Settle Community Leadership Award (biennial), and Wilma B. Hogan Enduring Community Project Award (biennial)
- **Disaster Relief** for communities facing natural emergencies
- **Club 52 Projects** that focus on children and international health programs
- **Support for over 130 Local Club Foundations (LCFs)** through our umbrella structure, enabling them to offer donors tax-deductible giving opportunities

Since our founding in **1962**, the Foundation has helped Altrusa Clubs deliver meaningful service and literacy programs. We **awarded over \$400,000** to Clubs and others in our communities in the last biennium. This vital impact is possible thanks to members like you.

We invite you to explore the **Lamplighter Program**, our annual donor recognition initiative, with five levels of giving:

- Lamplighter
- Lucente Lamplighter
- Hofmeister Lamplighter
- Albin Lamplighter
- Diamond Lamplighter (*our newest level established in 2025*)

These titles honor those who light the way for others through their philanthropy and service.

On behalf of the Altrusa International Foundation Board of Trustees, we're glad you're here and hope you enjoy every moment of learning, collaboration, and fellowship!

Yours in Altrusa service,

LaVone Arthur

LaVone Arthur
Chair, Altrusa International Foundation Board of Trustees

Our International Visitor

Penny Daugherty

Altrusa International of Mexico

International Vice President 2025 - 2027

Penny has been a member of Altrusa International of Mexico, MO since 2001. She is the Office Manager and Vice President of KXEO/KWWR Radio where she has been employed since 1999. She is married to Michael and together they have four children: Katelyn Daugherty, Sarah Hollenberg, Logan Daugherty, and Logan Meeks, as well as four beautiful granddaughters.



In addition to the busy work life at their family-owned radio station, grandchildren, and Altrusa, Penny and Michael enjoy traveling when time allows. They both volunteer on various service boards and committees in her hometown, including the Mexico Area Chamber of Commerce, Audrain County United Way, and Audrain County Relay for Life.

Penny originally started serving at the District level of Altrusa as a Communications Chair in 2008 and then was elected as a Director on the District Eight Board in 2011 before eventually serving as Governor from 2019 to 2021, International Director 2023 to 2025, and now is in her first year as International Vice President.

She credits Altrusa as playing a big part in helping her build more self-confidence and becoming a more effective leader. She has been encouraged by the way many Altrusa clubs have embraced and supported the International "Days for Girls" project at the level of their choice and hopes that mutual service projects and events will help bring our clubs closer together, gain more publicity, and attract new members that we can share the Altrusa bond with.

She is also a big supporter of the ASTRA program and hopes that it helps our organization stay relevant for another 100 years.

Penny is truly thankful for the support and friendships she has made over her years in Altrusa and looks forward to seeing those familiar faces on Zoom sessions, visiting clubs, at Conferences and at International Conventions.

This will be her first visit to District Fifteen, even though she has already worked with a few of the District's members. Please feel free to introduce yourself and get to know her while she is here.

Conference 2026 Speakers

Professor Bev Lawton

Maternity To Menopause



Professor Bev Lawton ONZM (Ngāti Porou), is the founder/director of Te Tātai Hauora o Hine (the National Centre for Women's Health Research Aotearoa, Te Herenga Waka Victoria University of Wellington) and a pioneering force in women's health in Aotearoa.

Named Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year (2025), she has driven critical advancements in cervical cancer screening, maternal health, and Indigenous health equity. Bev's advocacy led to New Zealand's historic shift to HPV self-testing as the primary method for cervical screening – making Aotearoa the first high-income country to do so.

Bev previously worked as a general practitioner in Wellington for 17 years and cofounded the Wellington Menopause Clinic. These experiences led to an interest in research to address the many questions relevant to women's health and inequities. Working closely with kaumātua, Bev builds strong relationships with communities, ensuring research is relevant and innovative, and grounded in Māori community engagement. Her research on women's and children's health has led to changes in policy and practice in Aotearoa and internationally. Bev's ability to disseminate important information about women's health more broadly ensures the profile of women's health in Aotearoa is elevated, and she regularly contributes expert commentary to media, providing evidence, ideas, and opportunities for system transformation. Her research-informed policies and international alliances continue to shape healthcare systems, tackle inequities and reduce preventable harm for wāhine Māori and all women across the motu.

Bev was appointed an Officer of the NZ Order of Merit by the Queen for services to women's health in 2005 and made a Distinguished Fellow of the Royal College of General Practitioners in 2017.

She was awarded the Royal Australia and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists Māori Women's Health Award in 2020; the 2021 Women of Influence Award (Innovation, Science and Health); The Beaven Medal by the Health Research Council in 2023; and The Maarire Goodall Award by Te Ohu Rata o Aotearoa in 2024.

Bev's mission is to illuminate those areas of wāhine, maternal and child health that require investigation, understanding and appropriate intervention, and to inform system changes to provide equitable outcomes particularly for Māori women, their children and whanau.

Dr Claire Robinson

You'll Never Know Until You Try



Dr Claire Robinson was most recently CEO of the Toi Mai Workforce Development Council for the creative, cultural, recreation and technology industries. Before joining Toi Mai Claire was Pro Vice-Chancellor of Massey University's College of Creative Arts, a member of the Massey's Senior Leadership Team and a Professor of Communication Design.

She is also an award-winning designer, author, political scientist and one of New Zealand's foremost political commentators.

Claire's areas of research expertise include political communication, political advertising and marketing, leadership image and media bias. Her book *Promises Promises: 80 Years of Wooing New Zealand Voters*, on the history of political advertising in New Zealand, was published by Massey University Press in 2019. In 2020/2021 she was commissioned as a regular columnist on New Zealand politics for *The Guardian*.

In 2020 Claire also turned her hand to writing her first play, *The Lee Letter*, a Machiavellian story of power and revenge inside New Zealand's first Labour government, featuring some of New Zealand's most well-known historical figures, including Michael Joseph Savage, John A. Lee and Peter Fraser. Between 2010 and 2017 Claire was a regular panellist on TVNZ's premier current affairs programme Q+A.

Claire has previously worked in the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade as Director of Public Diplomacy and Outreach (2009) and as a Foreign Policy Officer (1985-90). She worked as Private Secretary (Women's Affairs) for the Rt Hon. Jenny Shipley in 1991.

Claire is a mother of two adult children, e kui to one mokopuna, and step-mother to three adult children. She is also a breast cancer survivor of 22 years. Claire lives in Wellington with her partner Mark, a tradie.

Dr Claire Robinson's website lists her as an award-winning designer, a painter, author, playwright, political scientist, political commentator, and former diplomat, Professor of Communication Design, Te Tumu o Toi CEO of the (now disestablished) Toi Mai workforce development council for New Zealand's creative, cultural, recreation and technology sectors and former Pro Vice-Chancellor of Massey University's College of Creative Arts.

How has she managed to pack so much into her career?

Claire will talk about the mindset required to develop the confidence to try new activities and realise your potential

Governor's Annual Report 2026

This has been a busy year for the District Fifteen Board members and the District Fifteen Committees. The hard work done by all the District Board members and the Committees is outlined in their reports. The IFF Days, the Club visits, and their contributions to the success of Conference. I thank all these members for their time, dedication and support.

Five Altrusans represented District Fifteen at Convention in Quebec. Again, this was a wonderful opportunity to hear Chris DeVlieger's plans for her Biennium, and be introduced to her theme, "Love, Literacy and Legacy" Attending Convention is a valuable experience for the Governor to make connections, be inspired by high quality speakers and learn from the workshops on offer.

I have completed 5 Club visits this year, being home hosted for all, and getting to know more of our members. Thank you for your hospitality.

The Board has met 3 times in person, Post Conf in Invercargill, Mid-year and Pre Conference in Wellington. In addition, we have met 6 times via zoom. The focus has been to develop the Biennium theme "Share the Journey", find ways to improve the connections between our Clubs and District, between our Clubs and their Communities, and simply between our individual Clubs.

There have been four President Council meetings held this year, with each meeting having a different focus: Leadership, Membership, Service and Communications.

The Board has updated the forms used for Club visits, again to increase the interaction between Clubs and District and to make Club visits more meaningful for both the Board and the Club.

We are now focusing on updating the roles for District positions on the Website. The change in structure of the District Fifteen Board means the current descriptions are no longer relevant. One of the reasons for the changes was to make the years spent on the District Board much shorter and make being a District Board member more attractive to our membership. I hope this means the task of our new Nominating committee to find the next Board will be much simpler.

The focus on improving the relationship between Clubs and District has been on providing resources for Clubs. This is in the form of promotional ideas, introducing resources, sharing ideas from different Clubs and measuring the impact we are having as a combined group

There will be more on this in the "Absolutely Positively Altrusa" workshops later in the Conference programme. There is no doubt that our impact looks far more impressive and notable when we pool together.

There is also no doubt that as an organisation our numbers are dwindling. Yet this does not have to be the status quo. We do have Clubs that are growing in numbers. We need to look at those Clubs and see what they are doing to make this happen. We need to look at how we can adapt those actions to fit our own situation.

The reason for all the above, is to find ways to achieve the goals outlined in the District Strategic Plan. An important document we should not ignore, if we are to thrive as a District.

Organising Conference is also a large part of what I do. I thank the Past Governors for making this Conference happen. I hope you all enjoy your time here and go home with a renewed enthusiasm and lots of information to pass on to the rest of our members.

As Governor I have stayed connected to what is happening with International through monthly Governors Council meetings

I am constantly learning more about Altrusa, recognising the value we make to communities throughout the world. The legacy of Altrusa goes back more than a century. We should all be proud of that legacy and work towards continuing the difference we make for another century.

Thank you, to you all, for the part you play in making Altrusa the success it is.

Margaret Melhop, Governor 2025-2027

District Board Annual Reports 2026

Governor Elect

In July I attended my first International Convention. held in Quebec City, where I was an expediter, and I proudly carried my club banner in the parade of banners. It was a great opportunity to meet other Altrusans and my fellow Governor Elects.

I have completed club visits to Timaru, Oamaru and Taieri clubs, All three are in good shape but like many others suffering from ageing membership and recycling of leadership.

I conducted the Upper South Island IFF day in Timaru which had 21 registrations, made up of 17 from Timaru, 2 from Ashburton and 2 from Christchurch. There were 3 first timers. I also attended the Lower North Island IFF day hosted by Hawera Club as a participant along with 3 others from my Levin Club, one from Ohariu and the remainder were from Hawera.

As part of Governor Elect Training I have been attending monthly Zoom meetings which have been very helpful in preparing me for the Governors role. Other zoom meetings have been the Presidents Council meetings and board meetings. I have also attended a couple of zoom sessions run by Volunteer NZ, very interesting to note that all those present had the same problem of volunteers getting older and finding it difficult to recruit younger volunteers.

I have been tasked with updating the Job descriptions for the District Board, these should be completed by conference.

I will be attending Governor Elect training in USA in July provided there are no travel restrictions at that time.

Denys Astin, Governor Elect

Director 1

One year down and so much learnt that I look forward to the coming year and new challenges.

The most enjoyable time on the Board has been getting out and visiting clubs, meeting new Altrusans and catching up with old hands. In September I attended Te Kuiti's 25th Birthday celebration and it was great to mingle on a social basis with their club members. It was also an opportunity to reflect on how we all work together in helping those less fortunate than ourselves. In April I attended their Business Meeting and once again enjoyed their hospitality and getting to know what projects they were doing.

Later in September Hawera hosted IFF Day for the Lower North Island which I had the pleasure of being part of along with Levin and Ohariu. There were 23 attendees. The theme was Weaving Threads through our Community. They invited a local author to speak, and had a fun acting activity. I showed a video on Active Hearts, covered Foundation, Conference & Sister Clubs verses IFF Days.

I attended two meetings at Cambridge and been to two Volunteer Waikato meetings, one with the Cambridges president & one with a group from the Hamilton club. As I have registered with Volunteer Waikato they are now going to help promote our clubs and give support where needed. I have also attended a number of Board Meetings both online and in person which I have found invaluable and hopefully makes me a better person to support all my fellow Altrusans.

Jenny Wright Gardner, Director

Director 2

I carried out my first-year club visit to the Altrusa International of Hamilton in December 2025.

Two policies were assigned to me for review: the Publications Policy and the Membership Training and IFF Day Policy. Both policies have now been revised, and my feedback has been submitted to the Board for consideration.

My portfolio includes liaising with the Membership Committee. Over the past year I have maintained regular contact with the committee. They include me in their communications, and we work collaboratively to provide content for Facebook.

During the first three months of 2026, in conjunction with Gaylene Cumpstone from the Membership Committee, I have supported a club that has been experiencing challenges. I continue to offer assistance and guidance where possible.

Following feedback received at an IFF Day that the Board could provide additional fundraising ideas, I volunteered to develop a promotion and fundraising resource. This resource is a collection of ideas from District Fifteen clubs and has ideas from all 17 clubs. I am putting together a second resource for clubs around Social Media.

Megan Harding, Director

Director 3

Having completed my first year as Director for the District Fifteen Board, I wish to report on some of the key events.

A highlight was the opportunity to coordinate the Lower South Island IFF Day in Oamaru last November. Thirty two Altrusans attended from five clubs; Oamaru, Taieri, Queenstown, Invercargill and supporters from Timaru. Under the banner of "Share the Journey" many topics were covered: Club Reports, Astra, Sister Clubs, Why Altrusa? Volunteer NZ, Foundation, Distraction Packs, Active Hearts, Leadership and Training, Conference '26 as well as a Christmas Card making activity. Oamaru Altrusans were wonderful hosts providing great hospitality and fabulous food. Thank you again, Oamaru.

Another highlight was my recent club visit to Ashburton. It was great to meet neighbouring Altrusans and to learn more about their many successful projects such as Fabric Fair, Magic Mums, Ladies' Yoga for Afghani Refugees, 1000 books before Five plus the many other events that are continually humming along. Well done, Ashburton and best wishes for the next year.

Having attended a number of Board Meetings both in person and via Zoom, I have found it very interesting to learn about the workings of Altrusa at a District level. I have also enjoyed the opportunity to support clubs and committees in their Altrusan endeavours. I now look forward to my second year on the Board, hopefully with a little more understanding and knowledge of how I can better carry out my roll.

Robyn Brien, Director



District Chair Annual Reports 2026

Membership

Membership is fundamental to Altrusa International, where we continue to support our Governor's theme for this biennium, Share the Journey – Weaving Threads Through Our Community. Currently in New Zealand, we have 17 clubs with 369 members, including 17 emeritus members.

Across District Fifteen membership experiences have varied. Some clubs have welcomed new members and gained renewed energy, while others faced smaller numbers and shifting patterns of volunteering. Throughout this, members have collaborated on their numerous projects, sharing the journey and strengthening the bonds that connect our clubs through their work. Regular contact with clubs has been maintained via articles in each DSB on Facebook and through emails throughout the year. Each new member has received a welcome letter.

Throughout the year, clubs and the district have focused on retaining current members, making personal invitations, and fostering a welcoming environment for those considering joining Altrusa. This demonstrates that each invitation adds another thread, strengthening the fabric of Altrusa.

Supporting new members through orientation, mentoring, and inclusion remains a priority. These initial connections help new members feel part of Altrusa and encourage ongoing participation and leadership development. This ensures that Altrusa stays well-connected within our communities.

Thank you to all members for sharing the journey and for the many threads you contribute to Altrusa.

Rosemary Moore

Membership & Development Chair

Communications

We still have quite a way to go to achieving great photos on our website to tell our story!

It is important to keep our website up to date to “Share the Journey – Weaving threads through our community” so anyone visiting can see the difference all clubs are making in their individual communities – a fun photo says a thousand words. Your one interesting photo or project might just plant the seed in the heart of a future member of Altrusa.

A suggestion is to assign someone in your Club to be a PR person responsible for sending photos to the webmaster. Please make sure all in the photo have given permission!

We are relying more on social media such as Facebook. Many District Fifteen Clubs have an active face book page and Megan does a fabulous job of sharing club posts and making reels of the monthly happenings from clubs in District Fifteen.

At the Upper South Island IFF Day I gave a brief tour of the website using our cell phones as there was no wifi available.

Club newsletters which I receive are published on the website as soon as I can. The Directory takes time to update at the beginning of each Altrusa year but it is a valuable document for those holding office.

I have contributed 2 articles to the ‘Kiwi Altrusan’ and the communications team attended a President’s Council Zoom meeting. A ‘Communications Chat’ was emailed to all Presidents in October.

The Kiwi Altrusan team form part of Communications committee. This Biennium we have welcomed Robyn Moore, Te Awamutu, as the Kiwi Altrusan Editor and Pam Hayes, Tauranga, as Submissions editor. They have worked hard to bring you all a bright, newsy publication on a quarterly basis covering District Fifteen news as well as a snapshot of the fundraisers and projects happening up and down the country. Thank you, ladies, for all your tireless work in producing a very professional document. We said goodbye to Megan Harding as submissions editor to pursue her role as a Director on the District Fifteen Board.

Lastly, I thank Katrina Clokie – Ohariu as web support for her help with fixing my website errors or answering my “how to” questions in a very timely manner.

I am looking forward to the next year of Governor Margaret’s biennium, sharing the good news happening in all our clubs.

Jenny Bevin
Communications Chair

DSB

It has been a challenging year since last conference, but it has been a pleasure to be editor of the Kiwi Altrusan. Every edition is a new adventure into discovering more about the exciting events that our Clubs have been involved in and to find out what our District committees have been doing on our behalf.

Pam Hayes has been an excellent and supportive Submissions Editor and the Kiwi Altrusan wouldn't be what it is without her input and hard work.

A big thank you to Megan Harding as well for her continuing support.
 We will continue to work hard to provide an interesting and informative District newsletter.

Robyn Moore
Editor – The Kiwi Altrusan

Over the past two editions as the new Submission Editor, I’ve found myself on a steep but rewarding learning curve. Each issue has strengthened my understanding of how to present club stories in a way that is both engaging and true to the spirit of Altrusa. I’ve particularly enjoyed the opportunity to represent club contributions and with the support of Copilot I was able to expand the March edition by introducing more eye-catching, story-driven headlines rather than relying solely on club names. Feedback suggests this shift has been well received, and it’s encouraging to see clubs responding positively to a more dynamic style.

During the recent online Presidents Meeting, I took the opportunity to restate the submissions criteria and outline what is most helpful when preparing material for submission. I also encouraged clubs to focus on providing the essential details of their projects while keeping word counts manageable, ensuring their stories can be presented clearly and attractively.

As we move ahead, my focus remains on being part of producing a publication that celebrates our service, strengthens our connections, and reflects the vibrancy of District Fifteen.

Pam Hayes
Submissions Editor – The Kiwi Altrusan

Social Media

The Altrusa District Fifteen Facebook page continues to be a work in progress. Sharing District activity posts with clubs has helped to increase the activity by individual clubs, on their own pages. The focus for the last six months has been to post content that clubs can share on their own pages and to engage members. For the next six months the focus will be to have visibility with a wider audience.

Keeping the District Fifteen Facebook page moving and updated takes a lot of time and effort and I am a definitely not an expert so constantly experimenting. The monthly club activity reels and Love Grace Handbag Appeal posts have had the most views and engagement.

Social media is still a struggle for most clubs. The feedback is that members don't want to have their faces on social media, don't see the value, haven't thought about how to effectively use it, don't know where to start or don't have members who can manage the account. A possible solution could be to ask for volunteers across the district to be buddies who help clubs set up and maintain their pages.

**Megan Harding –
Facebook Administrator**

Foundation

Supporting International Foundation is very important as they are the body that manage the funds which enable Altrusa Clubs around the world to apply for Grants to run their projects. They also provide funds for Disaster relief, support Club 52 and the Altrusa International Awards : Mamie L. Bass Service Award, Dr. Nina Fay Calhoun International Relations Award and the Letha H. Brown Literacy Award.

And at International Conventions : the Anna H. Settle Community Leadership Award and the Wilma B. Hogan Enduring Community Project Award

During the last 12 months, I have attended three Foundation Zoom Meetings and reported these in our District Fifteen ' Kiwi Altrusan ' It's been great to join in the discussions and get to know the other Foundation Chairs and learn from their experiences.

I've also outlined a new vision to raise money for Foundation by looking for items all members could sell to friends/family and workmates, rather than just to members at conferences. Useful, affordable items that we can make a profit from. Several members have come up with excellent ideas and I look forward to learn how they've progressed.

Setting a target of \$5000 for the biennium was possibly a bit ambitious but with another 12 months to go, I'm sure that together, we can make good progress towards achieving the goal.

**Susi Chinnery-Brown
Foundation Chair**

Leadership

We have engaged with Club Presidents through attending the Presidents' Council Zoom meetings, and assisted Governor Margaret with a session focusing on leadership. It was great to have Club Presidents reaching out to us for assistance throughout the year. We collaborated with the District Fifteen Liaison, Denys Astin, and other Board members to come up with possible solutions for the President to take back to their members. The committee is available to provide support for Club Presidents and other officer holders.

President Elect training has focused on regular emails leading up to the conference covering key topics such as meeting agendas, effective email communication, planning, and financial management. Question-and-answer Zoom sessions are scheduled for March and April, with the final training to be delivered at conference through a workshop format.

Two articles have been submitted to the Kiwi Altrusan, with more planned for later in the year.

Anne McElwain
Leadership Chair

ASTRA

Once again Waitaki Girl's High School is District Fifteen's only ASTRA Club. Moving on from last years Conference Report, this club has gone from strength to strength. From 30 girls last year, the membership for the start of 2026 was 33, with many more showing an interest.

Since my last report to Conference, the girls helped pack jewellery for our Bazaar, designed kindness cards to include in the care packs for Women's Refuge, created care distraction packs for children in hospital as well as their baking and delivering cookies to local elderly residents. At the end of 2025 an apple tree was planted at Waitaki Girl's High School by the ASTRA girls. This, to quote the then President Gloria, was symbolising growth, unity and the lasting impact of service that ASTRA hopes to leave behind for future students.

During this first term of 2026 our ASTRA support team joined with this year's girls in yet another baking session, the first of many activities to come.

The girls support our Altrusa community events when asked and have been guests at our Vocational evening.

The District Fifteen Board made a generous donation to us to help in the purchase of ASTRA Pins. We really appreciate this much needed, welcomed support.

District Fifteen Service Chair, Karen, and myself are hoping to attend an ASTRA meeting sometime soon.

At one stage the District Fifteen Board talked about some form of ASTRA for young women who had left school. While this wouldn't be for our club, we wonder if anything has come of this idea.

While we are so pleased with our ASTRA club, it doesn't just happen. The support the girls receive from our support committee led by Elizabeth Ballantyne is truly amazing. These Altrusans give up hours of their time to help and guide these lovely young women, who will go out into the world knowing so much about service to their community.

Lynette Budge
ASTRA Chair.

Service

With the first year of the 2025 - 27 biennium coming to a close, Governor Margaret's theme of "Share the Journey, Weaving Threads Through Our Community" and International President Chris's theme "Love, Literacy & Legacy" are clearly visible as you scroll through club and District Fifteen Facebook posts, meet and chat with fellow members from neighbouring clubs during IFF Days.

They are also visible as you read the articles in the Kiwi Altrusan DSB showcasing the wonderful variety of service projects members have been involved in.

Clubs and members should feel very proud of the difference they've made in many people's lives. The fundraisers and service projects they have implemented to support their communities have spanned the age groups and wrapped around many vulnerable groups.

Leading up to Christmas it was wonderful to see many clubs bringing some much needed Christmas cheer to those who may otherwise find the festive season a less than happy time. Some of the projects were Santa to a Senior - for those in rest homes or isolated in the community, a catered lunch for older citizens, beautifully decorated or sewn bags containing food items, gifts (including books, clothing and treats) donated to social agencies to be shared with families, or donated to local groups within a club's area. These and many other Christmas inspired initiatives will have brought smiles to many faces, young and old during the festive season.

It's great to see Literacy to the fore in many projects. Well done members for taking any opportunity to distribute books. From gifts packs containing books for newborns, to book give aways at Children's Days or local festivals, plus rewarding school students for their achievements, Altrusa's core aim literacy, is consistently promoted.

The Love Grace Handbag Appeal generated a great response from clubs. Honouring Grace while supporting and showing care and compassion to women across New Zealand was a fitting celebration for International Women's Day.

Smaller commercially produced Distraction Packs have been promoted and purchased by a number of clubs. They are cost efficient and are being used for multiple purposes. Waiting rooms, First Responder's vehicles, social agencies, or even competition prizes to name a few. They are very versatile, so I encourage you to give them a try.

A gentle reminder that Days for Girls continues to be Altrusa's International Project. Some clubs and members continue to be involved with sewing bees, while others donate items for the kits or make monetary donations to help with the purchase of the necessary fabrics. Can we increase our efforts for the second year of the biennium?

The Active Hearts Foundation continues to make their presence felt in Nepal. Altrusa is keen to be involved in making this an international organisation we would like to support. Many of their projects revolve around literacy, so fits well with our philosophy. We are in contact with them and await a suggestion as to how we can begin helping a community in Nepal.

The Altrusa International Service Committee continues to connect with all districts through newsletters (found on the International website) and Zoom meetings. Updates, reminders, new ideas and challenges are shared. The "One Book At A Time" challenge is ongoing, with clubs being encouraged to submit the number of books they've distributed onto the International website.

Presenting our thoughts and ideas during the President's Council Zoom in November was a new experience for the Service Committee, but is a practical and positive platform enabling members to connect wherever they may be.

Thank you to all members. Be assured, the service you provide in your communities, whether it be a large or small project, does make a difference to the lives of others.

Thank you to the members of the Service Committee – Isabell Page, Glenys Rickerby, Susi Chinnery-Brown (Foundation), Lynette Budge (ASTRA) and Director Jenny Gardner-Wright for your support and guidance, as well as making yourselves available for Zoom meetings when you could. Your input has been much appreciated.

Karen Liddy
Service Chair

2026 Awards - Synopsis of Entries

Mamie L Bass Award - Service

Ashburton – Altrusa Well Being for Newcomers

Our community welcomes former refugees into it as part of New Zealand's annual refugee quota. We appreciate that it is often a difficult adjustment for them, so we set up a project for yoga classes for the former refugee ladies settling in the community. It was hoped that this would provide health, well-being, social and language opportunities in a supportive and friendly environment, providing support for their families, as "a happier mum will have happier children."

The project has been planned as a pilot project with and supported by the Refugee Settlement Support Service (RSSS) in our community.

Invercargill – Memories Revisited

A number of our members have had experiences of friends and relatives who have developed dementia.

The Hawthorndale Care Village Diversional Therapist saw a sample of the memory books and was enthusiastic about the resources. She could see the value of them for small discussion groups to try to stimulate memories and recreate the familiarity and rhythm of everyday life in a safe and secure setting.

The Village is new to Invercargill and is revolutionary for dementia care in New Zealand. Based on the Dutch care village, De Hogeweyk.

Oamaru – Senior Citizen Afternoon Tea

Members have, for ten years, provided in a variety of forms, food and entertainment for our senior citizens.

Our service group enjoys entertaining and acknowledging these important members of our community.

In March 2025 we issued invitations, transported, assisted and gave a delicious afternoon tea to our aging guests. Also, with the help of local musicians, entertained them with music and singing. Small gifts to take home were given as they departed.

A small gesture from us, but so appreciated and anticipated each year. It is known by the recipients as "The Altrusa Afternoon". A great promotion for our club.

Ohariu – Stationery for Schools

Stationery for Schools was a community literacy initiative designed to collect reusable stationery and distribute it to local schools to support students and teachers who may otherwise lack access to adequate supplies. Donations were collected at the end of the school year, sorted by club members, and redistributed to primary and intermediate schools across the wider Ohariu area.

Taieri – ANZAC - a Gesture of Remembrance

The Taieri Altrusa Club were visibly present reaching out to hundreds who attended the ANZAC Service. We distributed baskets full of ANZAC Biscuits, labelled with an Altrusa Sticker. The ANZAC biscuits have become a symbol of care, support and remembrance recognised as traditional expressions of respect and gratitude. This gesture was appreciated by all who attended and we were thanked by the main speaker and the RSA. It was a very successful way of projecting Altrusa in the community.

Together, these resources enabled the club to deliver a thoughtful, well-organised act of service honouring remembrance while strengthening community connections.

Timaru – Winter Warmers & Cuddle Rugs

Twenty children were helped by Women’s Refuge giving them toys and warm winter clothing. Seven children were given comforting cuddle rugs.

The committee carried out President Marilyn’s theme for the year of “Hands Joined – Making a Difference”, which fits in with our philosophy, aims and abilities.

The project has made our members more aware of the needs of Women’s Refuge in our community. The camaraderie of the club members was enhanced through working together on this project. Once again, Altrusa Timaru realises that through working together, we can ease the needs of our community.

Letha H Brown Award - Literacy

Ashburton - ‘Violet’s Scarf’ – Distribution to Primary Schools

Our project linked in with a local effort of knitting scarves for veterans by purchasing and distributing a small book titled “Violet’s Scarf” to the twenty local primary schools.

This book is a true story about a little girl in Riverton, who knitted a scarf for the war effort, and it was sent overseas to our troops via the Red Cross. Of all the parcels sent, her parcel with her knitted scarf ended up in the hands of her own brother.

We purchased locally and with a co-ordinated effort of all the Literacy Committee, donated it to all local schools.

Ōhāriu - Books for Bright Futures

Books for Bright Futures was an Altrusa Ōhāriu literacy initiative supporting families facing socioeconomic barriers in the Ōhāriu community. Partnering with Plunket and Linden Primary School and He Huarahi Tamariki Teen Parent Unit, the project delivered over 200 books and literacy resources to young families, primary students and teen parents. The project was funded through community fundraising and a US\$2,000 Altrusa International Foundation grant. All active club members contributed to the project with a total of 93 hours of service through fundraising, baking,

Taieri - Helping Children Through Literacy

This year the Altrusa Club of Taieri concentrated on supporting literacy involving children. An opportunity to discuss with Dunedin Hospital, led to purchasing books for children visiting Emergency and Intensive Care Departments. Children are vulnerable during traumatic times and need distractions and understanding when a loved one is gravely ill. Some communities have little literacy skills, not the ability to purchase books for their children and, this led to the initiative to provide books for babies, giving them early learning opportunities. The Foodbank and Market Day promotions led to positive feedback for Altrusa while donating books.

Timaru Club - Igniting Young Imaginations

The primary aim of the Igniting Young Imaginations project was to foster and encourage a lifelong love for reading. Our goal was to get as many books as possible into children's hands. We wanted children regardless of their circumstances, to have the opportunity to own a book. The Baby Bag project recognised the importance of reading to children from birth. The Books on the Bay project gave us the opportunity to gift hundreds of books to preschool and school aged children. The Rocket into Reading project encouraged readers to complete tasks to explore literature in creative ways.

Dr Nina Fay Calhoun Award - International

Ashburton - Building International Relations

We incorporated three projects in our Dr Nina Fay Calhoun International Award, reaching out to Mothers, newborn babies and children in developing countries.

Members knitted woolen hats for babies at Victoria Fall Hospital in Ethiopia, crafted No Sew blankets for babies and children in Zimbabwe, and members worked alongside another organisation to pack Birthing Kits for mothers in emergency and humanitarian situations in areas of Africa, the Pacific, and the Caribbean.

These projects reflect Altrusa members' love, care, and support towards International countries where some are in desperate situations and have very limited resources.



Conference 2026 Registrations

** First Timer to Conference

INTERNATIONAL VISITOR

Penny Daugherty
Altrusa Int. of Mexico
District Eight

ASHBURTON

Kathleen Bowman
Jane O'Reilly **
Isabell Page
Rosemary Moore
Lorraine Tew

CAMBRIDGE

Alison Burr

CHRISTCHURCH

Danae McConnel
Margaret Simpson

HAMILTON

Kathryn Anne Turner
Claire Wilson
Jenny Wright-Gardner

HAWERA

Robynne Harford
Linda Phillips

INVERCARGILL

Nellie Garthwaite
Kay Pringle

LEVIN

Denys Astin
Airini Bowler
Helen Clifford
Cherry Mathews
Ruth Rawlings
Sue Robbie

MORRINSVILLE

Susi Chinnery-Brown
Megan Harding
Linda Larsen

OAMARU

Liz Ballantyne
Lynette Budge
Jeanette Halcrow
Voreen Julius
Maria Mackay
Beverley Manson

OHARIU

Georgie Aspros
Katrina Clokie
Hannah Cook **
Sophia Max **
Patricia O'Donnell
Barbara Thompson **
Yolanda van Dorrestein **

QUEENSTOWN

Kate Dawson
Sharron Ede
Kay Edwards
Margaret Melhop
Ella Wilson

ROTORUA

Cynthia Clark
Katherine Fray
Phyl Goodwin
Wendy Morgan

TAIERI

Brenda Brook **
Anne McElwain
Claire Paterson

TAURANGA

Sue Amon **
Sandra Bonney
Margaret Dudfield
Ann Fulcher
Pam Hayes
Jan Maber
Catherine Moles
Margaret Robertson

TE AWAMUTU

Vicky Apps
Lynley Brier
Lynette Coutts
Jill Fraser
Tania Green
Christine Melville
Leanne Milligan
Robyn Moore
Claire Roigard **

TE KUITI

Gaylene Cumpstone

TIMARU

Jenny Bevin
Jenette Borrell
Robyn Brien
Karen Liddy
May Mason
Donna McColl
Nola Searle
Mary Stringer