

Altrusa International of Timaru

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Meetings held at Women's Community Centre Butler Street Timaru 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays at 5.30pm

District Fifteen Website [www.altrusa.org.nz](http://www.altrusa.org.nz)

International Website [www.altrusa.org](http://www.altrusa.org)



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*“Hands Joined –  
Making a Difference”*



## ***A Message from Acting President Donna.....***

Hopefully you all had a lovely Easter break and have finished munching your chocolates and Easter buns, if those are the things you like to indulge in!

It wasn't long ago that President Marilyn was here in charge of us all before we all wished her well for her move to Christchurch to be closer to family. Marilyn, we hope you are all making the most of the important family connections and thank you for your service to Altrusa International of Timaru since you joined in 2010.

For these last few month of the 2025-2026 year, under Marilyn's theme of "Hands Joined - Making a Difference", we have been busy with the Love Grace Handbag appeal, PJ's and bunny facecloths to Ranui Kindergarten, Children's day with Books on the Bay and the Rocket into Reading Challenge, Quiz night, Scholarship and Award applications for Mamie L. Bass and Letha H. Brown for Conference.

Thank you to everyone who puts their hands up to help in different ways. Every part you play helps the overall goal of raising funds to serve our community, create an interest in activities, increase literacy skills, as well as extending people's knowledge and awareness of Altrusa.

Soon we will have an early Changeover to officially welcome the new board, as I will be away from 17<sup>th</sup> May until 1<sup>st</sup> July (possibly subject to change), before several members attend Conference in Wellington from 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

Keep up the good work to Make a Difference.

***Donna***



## ***And a Message from outgoing Editor Karen.....***

At the time of writing, I'm looking forward to reading the next issue of Talk Timaru!

While I've enjoyed putting all the newsletter pieces together for the last couple of years, it's always good to freshen things up, and help create a new wave of interest in club activities, and maybe even ignite an interest in an activity you may not have been involved with before. Thank you Jenette for offering to take over the role of compiling this newsletter. I know it's in capable hands!

Thank you Raewyn for being the Submission's Editor and not minding chasing up any missing pieces!

Members, thank you for your contributions, and I encourage you to continue submitting your articles and photos, plus meet deadlines for Talk Timaru. It is a great read and a comprehensive record of Timaru Altrusa, and all they do for the community.

***Karen***

## 2025 -2026 Board Members

### President

Marilyn Ross

### President Elect

-

### Secretary

Donna McColl/Gaya Griffin

### Treasurer

Joan Watson

### Directors

Gill Barratt

Jenny Bevin

### Immediate Past President

Jenette Borrell

## 2025 - 2026 Committee Chairs

### Service

Karen Liddy

### Literacy

Jenny Bevin

### Membership

Robyn Brien

### Communications

Gillian Allan

## Dates to Diary

### May

- 1-3 *District Conference in Wellington*
- 9 Membership Muster @ Evie's 10:15am
- 5 Board Meeting
- 7 Positive Aging Expo @ Caroline Bay Hall
- 12 Business Meeting WCC 5:30pm
- 17 Fabric & Craft Fair @ West End Hall
- 19 Life Education Visit
- 26 Programme Meeting

### June

- 2 Board Meeting
- 9 Business meeting
- 14 Altrusa Christchurch celebrates 60 Years -  
Members invited
- 23 Programme Meeting

### July

- 7 Board meeting
- 14 Business Meeting
- 28 Programme Meeting



# Committee Chatter

## Literacy:

At the time of writing the last newsletter report we were in preparation mode for Children's Day and the conclusion of our Rocket into Reading challenge.

It was disappointing that the weather wasn't favourable on the day and so we had to relocate into the Bay Hall. However, we managed in more cramped conditions. Everyone was patient and were happy to take away good quality books. 800+ books found new homes on the day. A big thank you to my literacy team for the work they did getting this all set up and to those members who volunteered on the roster.

After Children's Day several of us met with Ingrid and Anita at the Library to debrief the Rocket into Reading challenge. The aim of the project was to increase an awareness of literacy by encouraging children with a fun way to read different books.

Discussion was held on how the project could be improved including:

- Using a different method of returning the challenge cards – eg box at the libraries
- Good incentives for completing the challenge cards
- Involve schools
- Make use of Super Story Monday held after school in the library

We are now focusing on a combined birthday and changeover celebration at the end on April.

I wish to thank my committee, Joan W, Joan C Raewyn P Nola, Gill and Cushla who have always been so willing to help in any way they can.

**Jenny Bevin**

## Service:

As the Altrusan year draws to a close, my thanks go to the Service Committee members for their support and commitment to the variety of fundraisers and projects the club has been involved with throughout the year. While our committee took on organising the Family Support Christmas treats project, I'm grateful to service members who also were very generous with their time and support as they got involved in projects that have made a difference in the community.

At present, many of our committee are involved in organising and preparing the many items being donated for the May 17th Fabric & Craft Fair. Thank you sincerely for stepping up when I've needed to step back.

Cathie, Evelyn, Gaya, Glenda, Karen, Jan and May, it's been a pleasure and a privilege to be the Chair of the Service Committee this year. Thank you for your support, company and commitment to all things Altrusan.

**Karen Liddy**

*“Hands Joined –  
Making a Difference”*

## Membership:

### The Chase Altrusa Style

At the March Programme Meeting, the Membership Committee produced The Chase Altrusa Style. The focus of the quiz was all things Altrusan and there were some tricky questions to grapple with.

The Team -

Joan Watson (Frederica Dagg)

Raewyn Hutton

Jenny Bevin

Mary Stringer (La Grande Dame)

Brandy Walsh aka Donna McColl

The Chaser aka Maria McKay



Four of our members agreed to be on the panel: Mary Stringer (La Grande Dame) Joan Watson (Frederica Dagg), Raewyn Hutton and Jenny Bevin. They all performed amazingly well and there was a draw shared between Mary and Raewyn at the halfway point.

The next step was to compete against THE CHASER aka The Joker and aka Maria McKay who is the District Parliamentarian. The battle was on between The CHASER and our two Timaru Altrusans however by a small margin, the CHASER was declared the winner.

Audience members also had a chance to win a prize, and Gaya Griffin took out the chocolate fish prize. Lots of interesting information was picked up by audience members – who knew there are Altrusans in Ukraine?

Well done to the Membership Committee for producing THE CHASE. It was a great opportunity for broadening our knowledge of Altrusa, lots of fun and many laughs!

**Robyn Brien**

# Projects

## Ranui Kindergarten – PJ's, Bunny Cloths & Books

Ranui Kindergarten asked if we would help them to purchase warm winter PJ's for their tamariki this year. We have supported this project previously and it was decided we would once again be willing. Donna Rooney purchased 40 different sizes of pyjamas at a cost of \$444, which we reimbursed them for.

There was discussion around extras to be included. As the Kindergarten already had books donated we decided to include some facecloths and as the bags of goodies were to be given out just prior to Easter, a few members got together and made them into a bunny shape, complete with a bow. These were given to the kindergarten to be put into bags.



On 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026, Jenny and Donna took a seat on the couch and were welcomed by the Kaiako and Tamariki singing a Waiata to us. It was very sweet.

The children waited very patiently for their name to be called by out and stepped forward to collect their bag. The noise of the room grew as their excited voices called out what they received – “I got pyjamas!”



“We’ve got the same ones!” “It’s a bunny!”  
“A book!”

We were reminded of the time we gave out the Booster Bags for Boys at South School and the buzz it created in the room.

Some children began reading their books straight away and one boy asked us, without words, to read his book to him.

Lauren O’Connor wrote and mentioned that **“their families were absolutely stoked with such amazing feedback for everyone who has helped provide them.”**



## Children's Day 2026

Even though the day was wintry for the [South Canterbury Children's Day](#) 800+ preloved books found new homes as many children selected several books from our vast range covering babies to older primary aged children.

Several children returned their Rocket into Reading Challenge card and chose a reward. This was a new project aimed at encouraging children to read a range of books during February. Thank you to [Timaru District Libraries](#) for being part of this project, distribution of challenge cards and contributing advice.



It was wonderful to be able to give children some excellent quality books to take home and call their own.

Mickey Mouse even chose a book on the day.

Many thanks to all of you who collected books or donated books for this project which we have now supported for 12 years.

## Love Grace Handbag Appeal

This year, our Club decided to celebrate International Women's Day with the Love Grace Handbag Appeal. Joan Constable and Raewyn offered to Co-Chair this project, along with a committee of four. After consultation, it was agreed that 20 handbags be filled, with a budget of \$1,200 to come from the Special Projects account.

Beautiful handbags were purchased from the SC Hospice Shop at very reasonable prices, and they also gave some discount. One or two were donated for which we were very grateful.

We purchased a bulk lot of the essential items and some of the "nice to haves" from The Warehouse which were on sale at the time. Members also donated some of the essential and "nice to have" items which meant we had fewer to purchase. We had one bag donated, filled with the essential items. Thank you very much.

The bags were filled at Raewyn's home, but there were some items purchased later which meant we could fill another four handbags, which were again purchased from the Hospice Shop.

The bags were delivered to Pinnacle Performance, the drop-off site on Thursday 5th March.

It was a very successful and worthwhile project, which I think we can all be very proud of.

# Altrusa Timaru Scholarship 2026

Twelve applications were received for the Altrusa Scholarship this year and all were deserving of being given our financial assistance, however, three were finally singled out for our support.

This year our scholarship provided \$2,000 in funds and this amount was divided equally between Megan McNeill and Vivien Leslie. Megan has just begun a Bachelor of Midwifery and Vivien a New Zealand Certificate in Health and Well Being. We were also very fortunate to be given \$500.00 from Heather McIntyre, a previous scholarship recipient and in turn the Scholarship Committee awarded this money to Edna Crichton who was so grateful to be able to fund her textbooks for the coming year. Edna is also studying for a Bachelor of Midwifery.

I wish to thank club members for raising \$2000.00 for the scholarship. This fundraising which has required many hours of commitment, has enabled three South Canterbury women to have a second chance at education.

I also wish to thank the members of the Scholarship Committee; Cathy Weith, Maureen Skinner and Gillian Allan who generously gave their time and considered opinions to the selection process. We also appreciated the support of Les Jones who has ably helped the interview panel for many years.



At left - Scholarship Chair Robyn presenting \$1000 to Winner Vivienne Leslie



Above - Scholarship Chair Robyn presenting \$1000 to Winner Megan McNeill



At left - Past Winner Heather McIntyre presenting \$500 to Edna Crichton

I also wish to thank the members of the Scholarship Committee; Cathy Weith, Maureen Skinner and Gillian Allan who generously gave their time and considered opinions to the selection process. We also appreciated the support of Les Jones who has ably helped the interview panel for many years.

Some snapshots from our celebrations last evening.

A full report of the Birthday and Changeover will be available in the next issue of this newsletter.



## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

### May

- 13 Carol Wilson
- 18 Maureen Skinner
- 26 Joan Constable

### June

- 10 Cathie Weith
- 18 Jan Bolton
- 22 Gill Barratt



### July

- 2 Lois Kirkwood
- 3 Evelyn Robinson

## Thank You! To My Secret Buddy

Thanks to my Secret Buddy for the Easter goodies and the lovely card.

**Cushla**

A thank you to my Secret Buddy for the yummy Easter bunny chocolate and card!

**Cathie Weith**

### ***A Note from Acting Editor Jenette -***

I was happy to be able to assist by putting together this final newsletter for the 2025 to 2026 year, but I will admit to being a little short of time as I did need to have it finished before the end of April. So any errors are sure to be mine.

My thanks to Karen for the years of service she has given to the club as Editor - they are big shoes to fill.

And thank you also to Raewyn for assisting with submissions - I don't have that luxury when writing the newsletters for work and I can see with just one issue what a wonderful help it is!

Happy reading!