

ALTRUSAGA

Altrusa International, Inc. of Chula Vista, California

Volume 63, Issue 8

January 2026

Vision: "Leaders in Service, building bridges that elevate, connect, and empower our communities."

Club Board	
Lina Cestero	President
Eva Salas	Vice President
Carmen Richardson	Secretary
Kristi Phillips	Treasurer
Elsie Aguirre Simpson	Director
Kathy Lightbody	Director
Patti Rahiser	Director
Glenda Hogg	Immediate Past President
Eva Salas	Altrusaga Editor
	Parliamentarian

President's Message

Dear Altrusans,

As we welcome 2026, this New Year, we are given a meaningful opportunity to pause, reflect, and look ahead with renewed hope. The turning of the calendar is more than a moment in time—it is a reminder that every year brings fresh beginnings, new goals, and the chance to grow both individually and together.

As we step into this New Year, I encourage everyone to cherish time with family and loved ones. In the midst of busy schedules and daily responsibilities, it is our families who ground us, support us, and remind us of what truly matters. Spending time together strengthens our bonds, renews our spirits, and gives us the encouragement we need to face the year ahead with confidence and compassion.

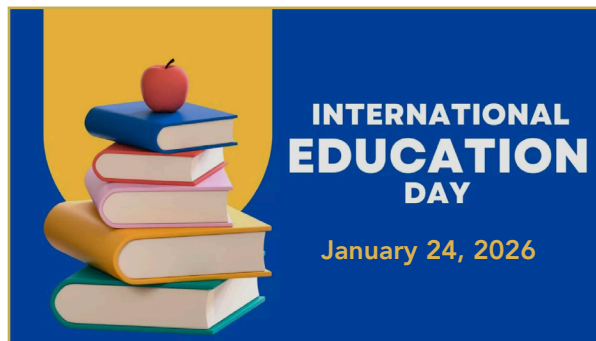


The New Year is also a time for resolutions. Individually, let us commit to being our best selves—showing kindness, staying engaged, and striving for personal growth. As a club, let us resolve to continue working together with unity, purpose, and pride, strengthening our connections and making a positive impact within our community. By supporting one another and staying focused on our shared mission, we can make this year our most successful yet.

I want to wish you and your families a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year. May it be filled with connection, gratitude, and shared moments that last a lifetime.

Your President
Lina

Foundation Board	
Lillian Leopold	President
Isis Perez	Vice President
Helyn Sloan	Secretary
Carmen Richardson	Treasurer
Helen Nosal	Director
Shauna Stokes	Director
Pat Upton	Director
	Immediate Past President



Mission:

Altrusa International of Chula Vista, Inc. is dedicated to improving the South Bay community by providing services and financial support, developing leadership, fostering education, and encouraging fellowship through an international network of dedicated volunteers.

Club Updates

Club Chairs 2025-2026

ASTRA	Lillian Leopold
Communications	Isis Perez
Hospitality	Helen Nosal
Membership	Glenda Hogg Helyn Sloan
Service	Elsie Aguirre-Simpson Eva Salas
Ways & Means	Carmen Richardson Helyn Sloan
Webmaster	Jessica Velasquez

January Birthday Month

3 Sharon Vega

15 Rosemarie Hudson

23 Elsie Aguirre Simpson

31 Isis Perez

calendar

JANUARY

MARY THIGPEN MONTH OF SERVICE

7	Board Meeting Mid-year committee reports due
9	First Friday Breakfast
15	Foundational Annual Report due to International Foundation
21	Business Meeting Elect Nominating Committee, Elect Delegates and Alternates for District Conference, Encourage members to contribute to Foundation's Disaster Relief Fund
24	International Day of Education
26	Submit articles to Altrusaga Editor
tbd	Submit articles to District for District Service Bulletin

January 7, 2026 Board Meeting 5:30 p.m.

Chula Vista Civic Library
365 F Street
Chula Vista, CA 91910

January 21, 2026 Business Meeting 6:00 p.m.

Chula Vista Civic Library
365 F Street
Chula Vista, CA 91910

Ways & Means Committee Meeting
Library Conference Room
Monday, January 12, 2026
at 5:00 p.m.

Service Committee Meeting
Library Conference Room
Monday, January 26, 2026
at 5:30 p.m.

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Altrusa Club of Chula Vista

Mailing address:
PO Box 6225
Chula Vista, CA 91909

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www.altrusacv.club



Diana, Voices for Children accepted the stuffed toys we donated for the children. Kathy Lightbody collected the toys from club members at the fall business meetings.

About the party



December.....Finishing strong!

Homeless Outreach Team Serving our Neighbors

Submitted by Sam Alzubaidi,
Park Ranger Program Manager, City of Chula Vista



One of the kits being given to an unsheltered neighbor.



In recognition of Kindness Week in the City of Chula Vista, the Homeless Outreach Team (HOT) assembled and distributed care packages to unsheltered individuals throughout the community. Each package included essential items such as male or female hygiene products, blankets, beanies, non perishable food items, and an educational pamphlet outlining local homeless resources.

A total of 40 care packages (20 male and 20 female) were successfully delivered across the community.

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of HOT members B. Jackson, T. Cate, A. Manzano, Z. Petrie, H. Lee, O. Vargas, J. Anzar, M. Perez, F. Herrera, and A. Pinedo-Gallardo, numerous individuals were contacted and provided with needed supplies. Notably, several unsheltered individuals who had previously been hesitant to accept assistance were willing to engage with HOT, allowing the team to build rapport and gather valuable information to support future outreach efforts.

This initiative reflects our continued commitment to compassion, service, and community engagement during Chula Vista's Kindness Week.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Altrusan Elizabeth Cox and her team for the outstanding work they do. I learn something new from you all every day. Please continue your remarkable efforts, there will always be community members in need, and your commitment truly has an impact.

JAG Kitchen Beneficiary of Sprouts "Grab & Give" Bags



Jenny Sabas, Southwestern College, and student volunteers stocked the shelves at Jag Kitchen Food Pantry, Southwestern College, Chula Vista, National City and Otay Mesa Campuses.

Once again Sprouts has stepped up to deliver! Sales of November and December Grab & Give bags benefited Jag Kitchen Food Pantry, an effort to supply food to students in need. Sprouts locations in Eastlake and west Chula Vista participated. Thanks to collaboration of Jenny Sabas and Elizabeth Cox this project is coming to full completion.

As a result the Pantries were stocked with: Coconut Rolls, Rice Cakes, Pinto Beans, Canned Vegetables, Peanut Butter, Sprouts Oatmeal, Canned Corn, Long Grain Rice.



When shopping at Sprouts Chula Vista or Eastlake - please pay for a \$14.99 bag and Sprouts will donate it to a local hunger relief agency to help families within our community. Donations will benefit Jag Kitchen, Southwestern College.



ASTRA



ASTRA at the South Bay Community Farm

Submitted by Lillian Leopold

It was Kindness Week at the Farm! A morning full of volunteering on farm duties. Altrusans Lillian Leopold and Elizabeth Cox worked with ASTRA students to help at South Bay Sustainable Community Farm in south San Diego on December 12, 2025. They spread mulch around the vegetable farm, cleaned the horse pen and turned buckets and buckets full of food compost into the compost bins.

The students were rewarded with freshly baked goods made by South Bay Sustainable Communities Founder Tina Matthias and fresh snow peas picked from the garden.



Club Announcements

January

Mary Thigpen Month of Service

Business Meeting

January 21, 2026

**Altrusa and Rotary
Senior Project**

Friday, January 23, 2026, Check presentation of check to Chula Vista Rotary at 12:00 p.m. meeting.

Hands on Project

Friday, February 13, 2026, assembling of gift bags for PACE Center seniors at Rotary meeting 12:00 p.m.

**Committee
Meetings**

Service: January 26, 2026
Ways & Means: January 12, 2026

Membership

Exciting things are happening. A lot of interest in our Club and it looks like we will be growing our membership. Don't miss the January meeting where you can meet some of those new members. Be there to welcome them to our Club and say "Hello".

We can thank our successful Tea's The Season fundraiser, social media presence, and working with other local 501c3 organizations throughout the past year. Just remember, if you know someone who you think would be a good fit for our Club, ask them to come to a meeting, bring them to the next membership mixer so they can get excited about becoming a Chula Vista Altrusan.

ITSOA,
Glenda Hogg & Helyn Sloan, Co-Chairs
Membership Committee



Service

Altrusa and Rotary Senior Project Update Submitted by Irasema Quilantan and Lisa Johnson

Our joint Altrusa and Rotary Senior Project is underway, and Altrusa is honored to dedicate this year's effort to the memory of our beloved Mary Thigpen.

Lisa Johnson and Mora De Murguia of Rotary and Irasema are currently awaiting the list of requested items from the senior PACE center, and we will share details as soon as they are available. In the meantime, please mark your calendars with the following confirmed dates. Lisa and Mora are the designated leads for this Rotary project.

Friday, January 23, 2026 - Altrusa will present a \$750 Altrusa Foundation check to the Chula Vista Rotary Club during their noon meeting at the Chula Vista Golf Course.

Friday, February 13, 2026 - Altrusans will join Rotary members for a hands-on service activity to assemble gift bags for the seniors living at the PACE center in Chula Vista. All packaging will take place during the noon Rotary meeting. Altrusans are warmly invited to participate and should let us know at the business meeting of January 21 or email IQ at iquilan@cox.net by Monday, February 2, 2026.



January Service Meeting

We have not met since November and it is important to attend the January meeting to move forward with the remaining service projects. We will discuss each one.

Looking at the chart you can see that we have accomplished a lot and your participation has not gone unnoticed. We will also discuss our past projects and improvements if needed going forward. Thank you for your cooperation.

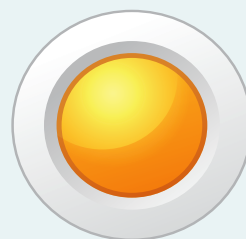
Project	Lead	Month
Grandparents Raising Grandchildren	Eva/IQ	Sept
Middle School Drone Project Camp	Lillian/Helen	Sept
Reading Program via Kellogg Cereal	Shauna	Sept
Make a Difference Day	Eva	Oct
Teacher Grants for Literacy	Elsie/Elizabeth	Sept
Kindness Week Service Project	Elizabeth/IQ	Nov
Middle School Girl's Female Robotics Camp	Lillian	TBD
Bikes for Kids Project	Elsie	Oct
ASTRA Service Project	Lillian	Nov
Mary Thigpen Service Grant Project	Lisa/IQ	Jan
Little Libraries/SBCS	Eva/Hillary	Spring
"Loving You Through It" Service Project	Helen	Spring
Tijuana Orphanage International Project	Jeri/IQ	Spring

2026 Service Committee Meetings

- Monday, January 26, 5:30 pm
- Monday, February 23, 5:30 pm
- Monday, March 23, 5:30 pm
- Monday, April 27, 5:30 pm

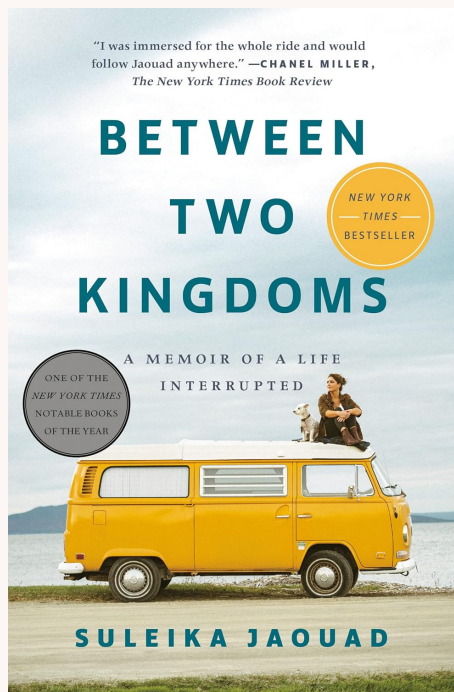
REPORT YOUR SERVICE HOURS

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdIRjZG9Z6m-SPFdVJAY-9ICNK0Nrrb6-Q2FaY8RvPYv1ffvyg/viewform>





Submitted by Betty Waznis



I learned about this writer when watching the documentary on Jon Batiste, Emmy award winning musician who led Steven Colbert's band for years. Suleika is his wife. I did not expect to enjoy this as much as I did; I am still thinking about it. It tells about the author's diagnosis of leukemia at the young age of 22, her struggles and victories, her heartbreak and enlightenment.

Between Two Kingdom:
A Memoir of a Life Interrupted
By Suleika Jaouad

Here are some review snippets --

Amazon-- A deeply moving memoir of illness and recovery that traces one young woman's journey from diagnosis to remission to re-entry into "normal" life—from the founder of The Isolation Journals and a subject of the Netflix documentary American Symphony

ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR: The New York Times Book Review, The Washington Post, Bloomberg, The Rumpus, She Reads, Library Journal, Booklist

"I was immersed for the whole ride and would follow Jaouad anywhere. . . . Her writing restores the moon, lights the way as we learn to endure the unknown."—Chanel Miller, The New York Times Book Review

"Beautifully crafted . . . affecting . . . a transformative read . . . Jaouad's insights about the self, connectedness, uncertainty and time speak to all of us."—The Washington Post



Committee Roster

ASTRA Chair: Lillian Leopold

COMMUNICATIONS Chair: Isis Perez

Lina Cestero
Carmen Richardson
Eva Salas
Hillary Sloan
Jessica Velasquez

HOSPITALITY Chair: Helen Nosal

Lina Cestero
Kathy Lightbody
Eva Salas
Sharon Vega

MEMBERSHIP Co-Chair: Glenda Hogg
Co-Chair: Helyn Sloan

SERVICE Co-Chair: Elsie Aguirre-Simpson
Co-Chair: Eva Salas

Lina Cestero
Elizabeth Cox
Barbara Everett
Glenda Hogg
Jeri Gustafsson
Lisa Johnson
Lillian Leopold
Kathy Lightbody
Helen Nosal
Kristi Phillips
Diego Quilantan
Irasema Quilantan
Patti Rahiser
Carmen Richardson
Maureen Roeber
Helyn Sloan
Hillary Sloan
Shauna Stokes
Jessica Velasquez
Betty Waznis

WAYS & MEANS Co-Chair: Carmen Richardson
Co-Chair: Helyn Sloan

Elsie Aguirre-Simpson
Mary Burroughs
Lina Cestero
Jeri Gustafsson
Glenda Hogg
Lisa Johnson
Kristi Phillips
Irasema Quilantan
Lily Ramirez
Maureen Roeber
Eva Salas
Pat Upton
Sharon Vega
Alana Wilson

ALTRUSA BUDDY TEAMS

TEAM 1

Lead: Alana Wilson
Helen Nosal
Lily Ramirez
Maureen Roeber
Hillary Sloan
Shauna Stokes
Jessica Velasquez

TEAM 2

Lead: Carmen Richardson
Barbara Everett
Jeri Gustafsson
Lisa Johnson
Isis Perez
Eva Salas
Helyn Sloan
Pat Upton

TEAM 3

Lead: Patti Rahiser
Mary Burroughs
Lina Cestero
Glenda Hogg
Diego Quilantan
Betty Waznis
Joy Whatley

TEAM 4

Lead: Elizabeth Cox & Kristi Phillips
Elsie Aguirre Simpson
Lillian Leopold
Kathy Lightbody
Irasema Quilantan
Sharon Vega

Monthly
Business Meeting



Thank you



The Eastlake Self Storage has been supporting Altrusa International of Chula Vista for over five years. Thank you for being our partner, saving us over **\$10,000** and allowing us to focus our funds on the needs of our community.