

# ALTRUSAGA

Altrusa International, Inc. of Chula Vista, California

Volume 63, Issue 8

January 2026

| 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.

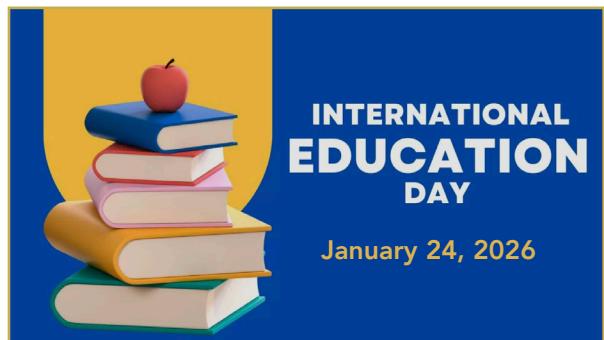


The New Year is also a time for resolutions. Individually, let us commit to being our best selves—showing kindness, staying engaged, and striving for personal growth. As a club, let us resolve to continue working together with unity, purpose, and pride, strengthening our connections and making a positive 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<br>Helyn Sloan         |
| Service        | Elsie Aguirre-Simpson<br>Eva Salas |
| Ways & Means   | Carmen Richardson<br>Helyn Sloan   |
| Webmaster      | Jessica Velasquez                  |

**January Birthday Month**

- 3 Sharon Vega
- 15 Rosemarie Hudson
- 23 Elsie Aguirre Simpson
- 31 Isis Perez

**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.**

Altrusaga is published monthly for  
 Altrusa Club of Chula Vista

Mailing address:  
 PO Box 6225  
 Chula Vista, CA 91909

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[www.altrusacv.club](http://www.altrusacv.club)



*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<br>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



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 .....*



*Holiday Party at The Gables*



## December.....Finishing strong!



One of the kits being given to an unsheltered neighbor.

### Homeless Outreach Team Serving our Neighbors

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



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.

# Grab & Give



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

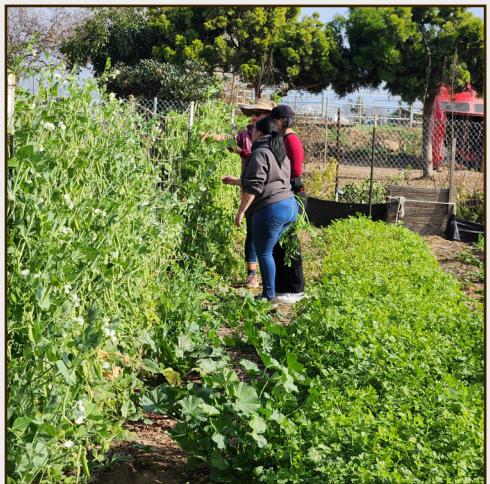


## ASTRA at the South Bay Community Farm

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

## Business Meeting

### Altrusa and Rotary Senior Project

### Hands on Project

### Committee Meetings

Mary Thigpen Month of Service

January 21, 2026

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

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

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



**Be a Buddy!**

# 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 Murgua 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.

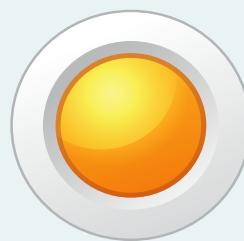
| Project                                   | Lead            | Month  |
|---|-----------------|--------|
| Grandparents Raising Grandchildren        | Eva/IQ          | Sept   |
| Middle School Drone Project Camp          | Lillian/Helen   | Sept   |
| Reading Program via Kellogg Cereal        | Shauna          | 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

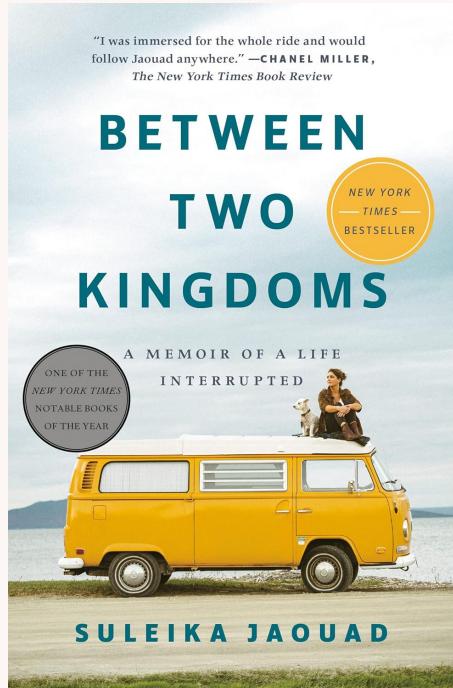
## REPORT YOUR SERVICE HOURS

<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 Jaoud

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



**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

**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.