

KEY CONTACTS:

Club Officers 2025-2026
President – Laurie Herman
1st Vice Pres – Jackie Wilson
2nd Vice Pres – Diane Shaw
Secretary – Amanda Allen
Treasurer – Kelli Langley
2nd Year Director – Kathy Jervis
1st Year Director – Chris Hanses
Immed. Past President -
Melanie Pederson
BRR Chair - Diane Bielanski
Parliamentarian – Jackie Wilson

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Altrusa HSV Website

[https://districteight.altrusa.org/
hot-springs-village/](https://districteight.altrusa.org/hot-springs-village/)

2025-2027 District Eight

Governor – Sarah Akin
Club Liaison –
Jennifer McKeown

District Eight Website

<https://districteight.altrusa.org>
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Featured Picture

Snack Fairy Delivery: Altrusans Joan Plautz, Melanie Pederson and Project Leader Kim Young posed with Jessievile Middle School counselor intern Anthony Dosch and Middle School Counselor Terah L. Pricop (center) when they and other Club members made the first of many "Snack Fairy" visits to the school.



Serving with 

President's Message – Laurie Herman

Happy New Year to all of you! But before we look ahead, let's look at how we finished our calendar year! WOW, just WOW.

We had three Service Projects and one Party – all in the same week! It's no wonder we try to take a break from our normal meetings in December!

We started out the first week of the month hosting Christmas Trivia at McAuley Senior Center. Those who went had a great time and even learned a thing or two about Christmas. We all agreed we should put this on our list to do it again next year. Even The Voice covered the event. Wasn't that a great photo of Joan Plautz in the paper!

The next day members traveled to Jessievile to continue our "Snack Fairy" project, by delivering snacks to the Middle School. The staff were thrilled to have them for the kids at school, and to send home, if necessary, over the holiday break. The Snack Fairies will return in the new year! Then members brought unwrapped gifts to our annual Christmas Party to support the Toys for Tykes program. We dropped them off at McGraw Realtors the following week for delivery to Mountain Pine children.

And how about that Christmas Party! The atmosphere was so festive with all the decorations at Doris Harder's home. Thank you, Doris, again for hosting all of us.

It was so nice to be able to relax and talk to our members on that special occasion.

Looking ahead, at our January meeting we will be initiating our new member Tara Santillanez – that is always such a joyous occasion. We will also be electing a nominating committee to help us select new officers for the Altrusa year beginning June 1. Please consider serving in one of our leadership positions. We will be asking you to start promoting our HUGE fundraiser Spring Fling Italiano, on March 7, 2026. Tickets will be ready to sell, and flyers will be ready to post all over town. We will have sponsorship letters for you to take to our community businesses. We really need help from all of you to make this a success.

I would like to thank all of you for everything you have done this past year. I believe if everyone just does a little bit – together we can accomplish a lot. All of you are the best examples of how this premise works.

Be safe and stay healthy!



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Serving with 
Laurie

January Days to Observe: International Day of Education Jan. 24, World Braille Day Jan 4

By Kathy Jervis

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed Jan. 24 as International Day of Education, in celebration of the role for education for peace and development. The theme for 2026 is "The Power of Youth in Co-Creating Education." It recognizes that people younger than 30 constitute more than half of the global population. They are a driving force for sustainable development, innovation, and social transformation. UNESCO says this about the theme: "When it comes to shaping the future of education, youth have a special role to play. They are the beneficiaries of education programs, and their future depends on it."

"For this reason, meaningfully engaging students, and youth in co-creating the education they want is essential to meet their aspirations and ambitions. This is particularly true at a time of radical transformation induced by the technological revolution, which calls for rethinking the purpose and modalities of teaching and learning."

Education transforms lives and breaks the cycle of poverty that traps so many children. An educated mother will make sure her children go and stay in school. This is fundamental, especially when more than 250 million children and youth are out of school globally and most of those in school are not acquiring the basic skills.

Additionally, 44 million teachers are needed to achieve universal primary and secondary education by 2030. These challenges are further compounded by 70 percent of countries who allocate less than 4 percent of their GDP to education.



World Braille Day

World Braille Day, celebrated on Jan. 4 each year, honors the legacy and contributions of Louis Braille, the inventor of Braille system of reading for those who are blind or sight impaired.

This day also raises awareness about the importance of Braille as a tactile reading and writing system. World Braille Day also serves as a reminder of the significance of accessibility and inclusion in education information dissemination.

Louis Braille was born on Jan. 4, 1809. It is a day to celebrate his life and the impact of the Braille system on the lives of people who are blind.

The United Nations General Assembly officially established World Braille Day on Dec. 17, 2018.

The theme for World Braille Day is "Accessibility and Inclusion for the Visually Impaired." This theme urges society and governments worldwide to adopt inclusive design and practices and Braille on all important documents such as ATM cards, public transportation cards, and bank enquiry books.



A Photo Too Adorable Not to Publish

When the Altrusa Snack Fairies visited Jessievile Middle School bearing treats for the students, they posed with holiday character inflatables and looked pretty Christmas-y themselves. That's project leader Kim Young, along with Service Committee Co-Chair Patti Geiser disguised as a reindeer and Joan Plautz posing as a Christmas tree. What a trio (or a quintet if you count the inflatables)!

Where are the Meeting Summaries?

Altrusa of HSV did not have an official meeting in December. Instead, we celebrated the season with a festive Christmas Party (see Page 6). The Altrusa Board also did not meet. Meeting summaries will resume in the February issue of the Dogwood Blossom.

-Amanda Allen, secretary

Committee Highlights

Membership

Mary Kramer, Chair

Fifth Friday Gathering Will Be Special – Bring Your Friends

With the holidays ending, it's time to have some Mid-Winter FUN! By the end of January, you'll be ready to have another celebration. On Jan. 30, our next Fifth Friday is a good time for member recruitment.

Don't hesitate to invite someone you met during the holidays. Altrusa might be just what they are looking for.

If you don't know anyone you want to invite, be sure to come and represent our Club and meet the friends that other members invited.

We will be making Valentines for the residents in assisted living at Mt. Carmel. We have all the

supplies for you to be creative, copy others, or just have a cup of cocoa. The time is 3:30-5 p.m., at the clubhouse of the Mt. Carmel Garden Homes, 417 Clubhouse (first right after entering the gates, clubhouse is about a 1/2-block on your left). Please come! You'll be glad you did.

The Membership Committee will be meeting Tuesday, Jan. 13, at 10 a.m. in the 417 Clubhouse building of Mt. Carmel Garden Homes.

Our meeting is open to all Club members. See what fun things we do. You just might want to join us!

Communications

Amanda Allen, Chair

The committee has been busy working on Spring Fling Italiano publicity and posting on social media about Butter Braid bread and cookies, the March 7 Spring Fling fundraiser, the Snack Fairy visits, and Trivia Day at McAuley Senior Center.

Next committee meeting is 3:30 p.m. Jan. 14 via Zoom.

Service

Patti Geiser, Valerie Derryberry Co-Chairs

December was a busy month for Service with Snack Fairy deliveries, Trivia Day at McAuley Senior Center, and Altrusa Reads.

Next meeting is 9:30 a.m. Jan. 22, home of Valerie Derryberry.

Finance

Diane Shaw, Chair

Altrusa members stepped up and increased sales of our Buttered Braid bread/cookies fundraiser this Fall over last Fall, with a profit of \$1,412 and 184 items sold.

Our fundraiser company has added new items that we may include in our Spring fundraiser – you'll be hearing more about these soon.

Next committee meeting is 11 a.m. Jan. 22 at mForce, 412 Ponce de Leon Dr., Suite A.

This Month's Accent by Laurie Herman

Who Will Lead Altrusa of HSV in 2026-27? Please Consider Serving as a Club Officer

As the new calendar year descends upon us, we need to remember that our membership year is only half over. We still have many things to accomplish before June 1. Among them are writing a grant request to the Altrusa International Foundation for one of our service projects, preparing submissions for District and International Awards, preparing year-end reports, and preparing a new slate of officers for the upcoming year and voting on those officers, and electing delegates to the District Eight Conference.

We have many new Altrusa members who may not know the process for electing new officers, and I think a review would be good for everyone.

In January, the membership will elect a Nominating Committee of at least three Club members who will be tasked with finding members to replace offices that will be vacated. The Club President cannot serve on this committee. The Nominating Committee will meet and put together a list of prospective candidates and contact them to see if they are willing to serve on the leadership team. The Nominating Committee notifies Club members at the February meeting of the slate of candidates who have made a commitment to serve if elected. Nominations also can be made from the floor.

The election will be held in March, and installation of officers is in May.

I ask that you all think seriously about serving in an office. Our club functions at a very high level because our members are willing to go the extra mile and help lead us down the path of dedicated service.

Service projects and fundraisers don't just happen by themselves, they need people to take the lead to get them started, they need people to serve on a committee to help develop the function, and of course, they need our dedicated members to "make it all happen."

Club officers lead the way and help our Club function smoothly.

Board members oversee the day-to-day functions of our Club, make sure we are following the guidelines of Altrusa International, and deal with issues that come up along the way. The good news is that every office has a predecessor that is more than willing to mentor new officers so their transition is smooth and they can take office with confidence.

We refer many times to "it takes a village" when talking about our service projects, but it also takes a village to keep our club running! Please consider serving on our leadership team that will take over June 1, 2026.

In Our Prayers

Diane Bielanski
Karen Brines
Velma Coolidge
Melanie Pederson's
husband Greg
Carole Thompson
Eyvonne Whipple
Jackie Wilson

January Birthdays

Elaine Schroeder 5
Laurie Herman 13



Lamplighter Status Made Easier

If you thought contributing \$500 to Altrusa International Foundation to



International News

become a Lamplighter donor is impossible for you, perhaps it's not. The Lamplighter program, started in 1987, recognizes Altrusans who donate \$500 annually to Altrusa Foundation programs.

Lamplighters receive a gold pin on their first donation, and a diamond for that pin upon each annual donation. Like me, many Club members might assume it's a one-time \$500 donation annually, and some of us are unlikely to find that amount in our monthly budget.

However, the December issue of the Foundation Impact newsletter highlighted another option – an “installment” plan that makes it more affordable.

If you contribute \$45 a month starting in January, you're at \$540 by the end of 2026 and you become a Lamplighter. Funds raised by the Foundation support multiple causes – disaster relief, scholarships, and grants to clubs for community service projects, among others. Altrusa of HSV has benefited from those grants.

-Amanda Allen

Upcoming Events

Jan. 1: Happy New Year!
Jan. 4: World Braille Day
Jan. 7: Business Meeting, McGraw Realtors HSV, 1060 DeSoto Blvd., hosted by Communications Committee. Social at 4 p.m., meeting at 4:30 p.m. to allow time for a speaker.
Jan. 13: Membership Development Committee, Mt. Carmel Community, 417 Clubhouse, 10 a.m.
Jan. 14: Communications Committee, via Zoom, 3:30 p.m.
Jan. 22: Service Committee, 9:30 a.m., home of Valerie Derryberry.
Jan. 22: Finance Committee, mForce, 412 Ponce de Leon Dr., Suite A, 11 a.m.
Jan. 24: International Day of Education
Jan. 26: Board meeting, 11 a.m., McGraw Realtors HSV.
Jan. 28: Loan Closet, 1-4 p.m. Volunteers: Laurie Herman and Jackie Wilson
Jan. 30: Special Fifth Friday at Mt. Carmel Community; bring a friend and prospective member for refreshments and a fun activity making Valentines for residents, 417 Clubhouse, 3:30-5 p.m.
Feb. 2: Groundhog Day
Feb. 5: Business Meeting, McGraw Realtors HSV, 1060 DeSoto Blvd., hosted by Finance Committee. Social at 4 p.m., meeting at 4:30 p.m.
Feb. 14: Valentine's Day
Feb. 16: Presidents' Day
Feb. 23: Board meeting, 11 a.m., McGraw Realtors HSV.

Save These Dates:

March 7: Spring Fling Italiano, dinner, dancing and entertainment by Ken Goodman and the TEF Combo, Coronado Community Center, 5-8:30 p.m.

March 18 and April 8: 4.0 GPA Student Recognition and Scholarship Luncheons.

Oct. 22: Altrusa of HSV's annual Game Day fundraiser.

Spring Fling Italiano – Just Two Months, Seven Days Away!

Altrusa's Spring fundraiser – Spring Fling Italiano – is shaping up to be a fun evening with a wonderful Italian dinner and dessert and entertainer extraordinaire Ken Goodman and the TEF Combo.

The Spring Fling committee, headed by President Laurie Herman, has been hard at work handling the details with the venue, entertainers, and caterer, securing decorations, designing, and printing flyers and tickets, printing volunteer signup sheets and drinking prosecco,

Wait a minute – drinking prosecco? It's for a good cause – the bottles are faceted and pretty and we'll be using them with lights in table centerpieces. Feel free to enjoy a bottle of Freixenet or Baglietti prosecco and donate it empty.

Here are the details for the event:

Spring Fling Italiano will be 5-8:30 p.m. at the Coronado Community Center, with dinner at 6 and entertainment featuring Ken Goodman and the TEF Combo starting around 6:30 p.m. Ken will sing and interact with the audience and the Combo will play songs that may make dancers take to the floor.

Tickets will be \$50 per person for a wonderful Italian meal catered by Home Plate Café & Bakery. On the menu are Lasagna Bolognese with four cheeses and two meats; salad with spring micro greens (ranch or raspberry vinaigrette dressing); Romano (flat) Italian-style green beans sautéed with sun-dried tomatoes, garlic, and olive oil; rosemary and garlic Italian rolls, and four-layer Italian Cream Cake. The gluten free/vegetarian option is Four-Cheese Lasagna made with vegetable marinara, using gluten-free noodles; the micro greens salad; the Romano green beans; optional Italian rolls; and strawberry amaretto cake made with almond flour. Coffee, water, and tea will be available.

Committee members are Amanda Allen, Beth Annen, Patti Geiser, Kathy Jervis, Diane Shaw, Kim Young, and Jackie Wilson, with support from ticket-master Gail Dann and graphics-master Joanna Horton.

To pull off a successful evening and fundraiser, though, the committee needs your help. We'll be asking Club members to post flyers around town, solicit sponsorships from businesses, and sell, sell, sell tickets to their friends.

At the Jan. 7 Business Meeting, we'll have signup forms for volunteers, printed tickets to sell, flyers to distribute and donor letters to use when soliciting business sponsorships. (Flyer on Page 5)

Altrusa International of
Hot Springs Village
Presents:

Spring Fling Italiano

March 7th, 2026

Coronado Center

DOORS OPEN AT 5:00PM

DINNER SERVED AT 6:00PM

Italian Dinner and Dessert

Followed by Entertainment Featuring:

Ken Goodman and the TEF Combo

for your listening and dancing enjoyment

\$50 per person

For information contact:

Amanda Allen

404-276-4689

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Are You Smarter than a McAuley Senior? When It Comes to Christmas Trivia, Don't Bet On It!

What do you know about Christmas? Seniors at the McAuley Senior Center knew quite a bit, even guessing the name of the dessert British sailors enjoyed in the 18th Century. Who wants a second helping of Figgy Pudding? Altrusa of HSV organized a Christmas Trivia contest during lunchtime at the center on Dec. 2, with four teams of seniors participating and Altrusans cheering them on. The teams answered holiday-related questions, ranging from comparatively easy to obscure, on traditions, entertainment and movies, carols, poinsettia sales, and more.

For instance, "Who won an Academy Award for his portrayal of Santa Claus and in what movie did he star?" If you're old enough and can remember his name, you'd guess Edmund Gwenn, the unforgettable Santa in "Miracle on 34th Street."

Team 24 (named for the night before Christmas) had the most correct answers, but everyone had a good time and left with small gifts and prizes. Atrusans who helped with the event are saying, "Let's do this again next year."



Next Question, Please?

At left, Emcee Joan Plautz reads the questions with pizzazz (that's Irene Keith and Patti Geiser at the table in the background); below, Lynda Grasse, who led the Altrusa Trivia Day project, and Jackie Wilson and Valerie Derryberry cheer on one of the teams.



Celebrating Christmas, Friendships

Altrusans, spouses and friends came together for a holiday celebration at Doris Harder's home (that's Doris, at right, with Martha Smither). We brought more than 40 games and toys to donate to Toys for Tykes (above). Everybody dined, mingled, and enjoyed a relaxed and festive evening. Thank you, Doris, for opening your beautiful home.

