



AT YOUR SERVICE
INTERNATIONAL SERVICE DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER
SPECIAL LITERACY AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY ISSUE
FALL, 2008



VOLUME 1, ISSUE 5

EDITORS, CINDY SCHAD & MARY HANZEL, SERVICE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
2007-2009

AT YOUR SERVICE

September greetings to you! In this issue we are focusing on International Literacy Day 2008, Make a Difference Day 2008, Altrusa's ABC Book Box International Service Project, Club 21 (Altrusa's commitment to Project Safe Haven) and the history of Altrusa's involvement with literacy. There are also several literacy project ideas listed.

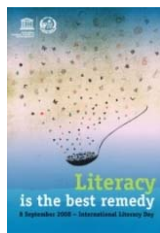
We look forward to hearing from you about the projects your club is working on or have completed. We will publish your projects in our next newsletter. Please send pictures if you have them also. We will also forward what we receive to www.altrusa.com.

We wish you much success as you *EMBRACE THE WORLD AS LEADERS IN SERVICE!*

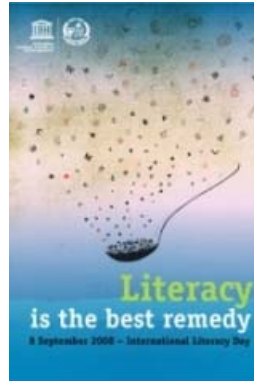
Mamie L. Bass - Principle #4



Altrusa in the very derivation of its name is committed to the philosophy of unselfishness, of the joy of giving rather than getting, and to the search for that happiness which is based upon spiritual worthiness.



INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY – SEPTEMBER 8, 2008



"Literacy is the best remedy" is the theme for 2008

September 8 was proclaimed **International Literacy Day** by UNESCO* on November 17, 1965. It was first celebrated in 1966. Its aim is to highlight the importance of literacy to individuals, communities and societies. On International Literacy Day each year, UNESCO reminds the international community of the status of literacy and adult learning globally. Celebrations take place around the world.

Some 774 million adults lack minimum literacy skills; one in five adults is still not literate and two-thirds of them are women; 72.1 million children are out-of-school and many more attend irregularly or drop out.

According to UNESCO's "Global Monitoring Report on Education for All (2006)", South and West Asia has the lowest regional adult literacy rate (58.6%), followed by sub Saharan, Africa (59.7%), and the Arab States (62.7%). Countries with the lowest literacy rates in the world are Burkina Faso (12.8%), Niger (14.4%) and Mali (19%). The report shows a clear connection between illiteracy and countries in severe poverty, and between illiteracy and prejudice against women.



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The celebration's theme for 2007 and 2008 is "Literacy and Health". This is also the thematic emphasis of the 2007-2008 biennium of the United Nations Literacy Decade. In particular, International Literacy Day 2008 has a strong emphasis on Literacy and Epidemics with a focus on communicable diseases such as HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria, some of the world's most important public health concerns. **(From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)**

(*UNESCO - the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was founded on 16 November 1945. For this specialized United Nations agency, it is not enough to build classrooms in devastated countries or to publish scientific breakthroughs. Education, Social and Natural Science, Culture and Communication are the means to a far more ambitious goal: to build peace in the minds of men.)

(Per Wikipedia) World Literacy Rates:

20% of the world population was illiterate in 1998 by the United Nations definition - the inability to read and write a simple sentence in any language. Using a definition of: "age 15 and over can read and write", the U.S. CIA World Factbook estimated in 2007 that the overall world literacy rate was 82%." East Asian and Latin American countries generally have illiteracy rates in the 10 to 15% region while developed countries have illiteracy rates of a few percent.

Literacy rates can vary widely from country to country or region to region. This often coincides with the region's wealth or urbanization, though many factors play a role.

ALTRUSA'S COMMITMENT TO LITERACY

As written in the Altrusa tradition:

The 1970's brought a search for a new, major international emphasis. As other organizations were known for their work with the deaf, the blind and the disabled, clubs wanted Altrusa to be identified with a cause. Accordingly, nutrition was explored in the 1973-1975 biennium and the strengthening of family life became the 1975-1977 focus. When "action for literacy" was introduced in 1977, Altrusa knew it had found its ongoing crusade. Conquering illiteracy, one of the world's most deliberating "ills" through a unified international program, was decided to be the direction Altrusa should take. The program was voted upon in Brighton, England, at convention in 1977, and "action for literacy" took its place next to grants-in-aid and founders fund vocational aid as the third funding project of the Altrusa International Foundation, Inc.

The resolution ratified read" that Altrusa international inc. immediately adopt as an ongoing major service, the elimination of illiteracy worldwide."

In 1982, Altrusa's ongoing fight for literacy was carried beyond local clubs when the international foundation agreed to fund classes in ten village literacy schools in Kerala, India. In 1987, the foundation made literacy its major focus and the ABC Literacy Grants Program was established: to provide financial assistance to Altrusa clubs introducing literacy projects into their communities, to enhance existing local programs and for literacy projects which can be replicated by clubs in other areas and to assist individuals to complete education in literacy fields.



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At the July 2001, International Board of Directors meeting, Literacy was adopted as the charitable focus of Altrusa International.

IDEAS FOR LITERACY PROJECTS

- Make a reading nook for a local laundry mat.
- Collect books to start a new library for Head Start, a homeless shelter, a women's shelter, etc.
- Host an essay contest with prizes for a local school.
- Have a booth to attract literacy volunteers.
- Start a book cart for an area prison.
- Raise funds for the local library.
- Host a book shower for a local community organization.
- Subscriptions to magazines for women's shelters.
- Record books for non-reading parents and their children.
- CD-ROM encyclopedia for youth organizations.
- Donation to library in honor of scholastic achievement.
- Contest sponsorship: to promote writing or reading - host a party with prizes.
- Read to pre-schoolers, to the elderly or to the sight-impaired.
- Arrange a workshop for school newspaper journalists.
- Provide transportation for kids (or families) to the library
- Build book shelves.
- Assist with Girl or Boy Scouts reading badges.



- Make a display on women authors at schools or libraries.
- Arrange for writing workshops for kids with local authors.
- Help with GED-gift certificates or offer baby-sitting services to single mothers furthering their education.
 - Host an event to encourage people to commit to becoming tutors.
 - Record books on tape for the blind and elderly.
 - Arrange a workshop on test taking and the SAT for high school students.
 - Provide scholarship for reading programs.
 - Host a banquet or event to recognize literacy volunteers.
 - Collect books for shelters and youth centers.
- Create a reading corner in a local shelter.
- Donate or make book bags for children in shelters.
- Hold a fundraiser for a literacy program.
- Sponsor a contest to design reading posters for the local library

MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY OCT 25, 2008



For the eleventh year in a row, Altrusa is launching an effort to combat illiteracy through Make a Difference Day on **October 25, 2008.**

Let's **show the world** that Altrusans will make a difference. Since we are an International

organization, we can impact millions of people



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all over the world. In the 2007-2009 biennium alone, Altrusans donated and distributed over 450,000 books to adults and children of all ages.

Make a Difference Day is a unique way to help others. Let's "Embrace the World" as Leaders in Service by making a difference on **October 25, 2008**. Through our combined efforts, we have the power to promote literacy from city to city, state to state and country to country. Although we are separated by many miles, we are always united in service. Design a literacy project that is especially needed in your area, or take a look at our list of projects that other clubs have conducted successfully.

For the last seventeen years, *USA Weekend Magazine* and its partners have sponsored Make a Difference Day as an annual event. Make a Difference Day is a day for members like you to continue to do good things for others. Altrusa International, Inc. is making a difference by "Embracing the World" and being Leaders in Service.

ABC BOOK BOX PROJECT UPDATE

It has been five years since Altrusa International Inc. introduced Altrusa Book Collection (ABC) Boxes as an international service project. One of the aims of this project was to spread Altrusa's name throughout a club's community.



The boxes would promote Altrusa's service focus being to improve literacy worldwide. This

wonderful project was conceptualized by Altrusa Clubs in District Fifteen.

Since the original prototype, Altrusans have expended to other creative ways to collect books for Altrusa. District Four uses blue plastic boxes that display's Altrusa's logo on the top. Whatever the form of collection, the end result is still the same-to create community awareness and involvement in literacy by donating new and gently used books.

I googled the internet for Altrusa ABC Book Boxes and was excited to see so many links to clubs promoting ABC Book Boxes. I was encouraged to read about the number of districts actively promoting this international project.

Below are a few tips for having a successful ABC Book Box Project:

- Use whatever type of container works! Just make sure your club name appears on the container along with Altrusa's logo.
- Be sure to recycle the books often.
- Promote book distributions from books collected as ABC Book Box donations.
- Be creative as to where you place your box (es). Book stores, grocery stores, children's stores, churches, professional business buildings, malls, government buildings are just a few of the locations.

As your International Service Development Committee, we would like to know if your club currently has an ABC Book Box, its location and your clubs success with the project.



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Please ask your service chair to email us:



cindyaltrusa@gmail.com or
 mhanzel@pensioninc.net

SHARING YOUR CLUB PROJECTS WITH OTHERS

Altrusans have always been involved with various service projects that help the community. Here are some examples:

- Coats for Kids (Washington Court House, OH)
- Wood to Wonderful (Reading-Berks, PA)
- Wonderland of Books (Houston, TX)

Have you visited Altrusa.com to read about all of the projects our clubs are involved in? Have you checked to see that the projects your club has completed are listed on the service database on the link entitled Altrusa Service Projects? This is also a great way to receive project ideas for you club and a contact name for projects you may be interested in.

CLUB 21 AS A CLUB SERVICE PROJECT

For several years, Altrusans have supported Camp Safe Haven and the Ghana, West Africa project. The donation for Altrusans is \$21.00 per year with a major drive for membership in April of every year.

Why not encourage your members to all sign up or renew together as a club project? Just think of the difference we could make if we had 100% membership participation in our clubs!

This is an excerpt from the Safe Haven website:

Sometimes it is the simplest things that make the most difference to a kid; a game of four-square, a dip in the pool, a new best friend and marshmallows under the moon.

For many kids living with HIV and AIDS life is anything but simple; full of meds, secrets, prejudice and illness.

Many wish for a chance to just be a kid, someone just like everyone else ready to play, laugh and dream.

The Safe Haven Project is committed to creating opportunities for kids to be kids. Annual camps offer a chance to get a break, take a breath and just be accepted.

For over 14 years, Safe Haven has reached out to hundreds of kids living with HIV and AIDS, offering life-changing experiences throughout the United States.

Your contributions help Safe Haven provide camp programs, educational outreach to the greater community of young people, and life changing outreach in Ghana, West Africa. You can make such a difference!

