

# Starting an ASTRA Club

## Getting Started

1. The sponsoring Altrusa Club identifies opportunity for ASTRA Club at local school or in community and budgets startup costs around \$100 - \$150 per club. (May consider loaning funds to cover additional costs of t-shirts.) The startup expenses should cover initial printing, paper, postage, envelopes, folders and charter ceremony expenses.
2. ASTRA Chair and/or ASTRA Advisors from sponsoring Altrusa club hosts a tea party, ice cream social or luncheon (food attracts teenagers).
3. Altrusans gather names and addresses of students attending the *same school or from local area* and/or their friends interested in serving their community. Invite representatives from other area ASTRA Boards to attend and participate if possible. Suggest having round tables of 6 -8 with at least one Altrusan or ASTRA representative at each table to answer questions.
4. Lead discussion about Altrusa International, Inc. and how ASTRA Clubs worldwide offer unique leadership experiences and service opportunities by allowing young people as a group to elect officers, to draft club by-laws and to decide on service projects together.
5. **REMEMBER: ASTRA Clubs do not have to be school sponsored. The sponsoring Altrusa Club and their ASTRA Advisors can sponsor a club.**
6. A club needs 15 members to obtain a charter.

## ASTRA Club if school-sponsored

If the response from the young people is favorable then meet with school principal to understand his/her thoughts on having the school sponsor the ASTRA Club, the benefits to the school and what it would require to get started.

1. Identify a teacher at the school to be an Advisors along with at least one or two Altrusan Advisors (discuss time commitment and responsibilities)
2. Use school facilities for meetings and functions
3. Post announcements in school newsletter, passing out flyers and posting notices on bulletin boards
4. If possible set up a separate bank account exclusive from school funds
  - May be required to use school account
  - May be able to open a ASTRA account under the local Altrusa chapter at outside bank
  - Must be reconciled by ASTRA Treasurer
5. The benefits to the school are the service hours accumulated by the club count towards the school's service goals. Also, an ASTRA Club increases positive school recognition in community.
6. Altrusan Advisors need to meet with school advisor to discuss their roles in the club.

## Formation Meeting

1. ASTRA Advisors coordinate the date, time and location to discuss forming the club with prospective members. Topics to discuss include: (plan for a 2 hour meeting)
  - § Creating and approving process for by-laws and operating guidelines
  - § Election of Board members (at least 4 officers)

- § Meeting dates and times
- § Service projects ideas
- 2. Advisors send out letters or invitations, at least 2 weeks in advance, to interested young people to attend tea or luncheon.
- 3. Advisors prepare new member packets which should include:
  - § draft of the bylaws
  - § suggested operating guidelines
  - § responsibilities for Officers and Board
- 4. Prepare sign in sheet for attendees to provide name, address, home and cell phone numbers and email address

**Agenda for meeting – led by Altrusa Advisors (until elections held)**

1. Introductions
2. Handout new member packets (use pocket folders to hold inserts)
3. Discuss and approve bylaws
4. Decide annual dues
5. Define roles of officers and committee chairs (in by-laws)
6. Discuss Motto and Logo (included in by-laws)
7. Must have club consensus on by-laws and operating guidelines
8. Elect Board members (consider co-Chairs but keep Board manageable)
9. Discuss Charter ceremony - Board coordinates
10. Set date, time and place for first Board meeting (suggest within two weeks)
11. Discuss committee assignment process
12. Treasurer begins collecting dues
13. Request Publicity Chair send press release to local newspapers announcing formation of new club with President approval
14. Adjourn

Suggest refreshments be provided: (i.e. sodas, water, pizza, cookies, subway sandwiches, ice cream bars etc.)

**First Board Meeting – suggest Board meet at least once a month**

1. Agenda prepared with Advisors
2. Suggest Advisors meet with President prior to Board meeting to prepare agenda
3. Reminder notices sent by mail a week in advance
4. President presides
5. Review final bylaws and guidelines ensuring all changes are included from club meeting
6. Discuss Officer and Committee Chair's responsibilities (see attached descriptions)
7. Discuss developing annual budget and set deadline for completion (see sample budget)
8. Secretary and Altrusa Advisors notify Altrusa International, Inc. of date & time of new charter and elected officers.
9. Discuss committees and assign members. Send out list with next meeting notice. Committee Chairs are requested to schedule their committee meetings before next club meeting
10. Officers and committee chairs schedule times to meet with Altrusa Advisors one-on-one
11. Discuss t-shirt design and costs – Membership Chair responsibility

**Charter Ceremony**

- § Notify International to obtain charter certificate
- § Select date, time and place ensuring Board members are available

- § Program and Membership Chairs coordinate with President and Advisors
- § Contact District President and District ASTRA Chair to participate in ceremony and their availability
- § Send invitations with RSVP at least two weeks in advance (recommend E-vites if funds are limited)
  - obtain list of sponsoring Altrusa club members
  - obtain list of Altrusa district officers and any Altrusa international officers in district
  - addresses for members, their parents and any relatives
  - addresses for any school representatives
  - invite Board members from other local ASTRA clubs
  - Consider sending invitations to city mayor, council member or other local dignitary
- § Publicity Chair - write announcement for local newspaper and Altrusa newsletter – may want to publish with photos after event
- § Plan for refreshments, decorations, ceremony items, plates and utensils.
- § Suggest Advisors contact hostess or host (if at family home) to ensure correct information is communicated
- § Assign photographer
- § Recommended ASTRA dress code: dresses or skirts for girls and slacks and shirts with collars for boys
- § Prepare membership cards designed by Membership Chair and Advisors
- § ASTRA pins or charms are available from Doc Morgan
- § Ensure dues are collected prior to ceremony

### **First Club Meeting**

#### **Prior to meeting**

1. Program Chair confirms meeting location, date and time with President then mails meeting notices requesting RSVPs at least one week in advance
2. Publicity Chair creates flyers and an article for school newsletter
3. Encourage members to invite interested young people
4. If meeting is at a member's home then Program Chair contacts hostess confirming date, time and quantity of refreshments, if needed
5. Membership Chair prepares name tags and member/guest sign-in sheet
6. Service Chair schedules at least one service project to announce at meeting (prepare signup sheet and/or handouts with address and directions)
7. President prepares goals for club and agenda for meeting

### **Opening a Bank Account**

- Sponsoring Altrusa Board approves Secretary Certificate naming authorized signatories (suggest Altrusa Advisors and ASTRA Treasurer; if needed add President) and name and place of bank (see attached example)
- Sponsoring Altrusa President and Secretary sign bank documents (small business account for non-profits)
- Provide copy of minutes of election of Altrusa officers to support signatures
- Style account: i.e. *Altrusa International, Inc. of Downtown Dallas dba ASTRA Club of East Dallas*
- File assumed name certificate with county and state (\$15 – \$20)
- All signers meet at bank to open account and sign signature cards, order checks, deposit slips and endorsement stamp

- Maintain a minimum balance as required by bank or at least \$200 - \$300
- At least one signer on the account must be over 18
- Bank will require copy of driver's license
- Altrusa Advisors retains checkbook (follow reimbursement procedures)
- Deposits may be made by ASTRA Treasurer
- Request online banking to monitor account
- Bank statements mailed to Altrusa Advisors
- ASTRA Treasurer reconciles account then forwards copy to Altrusa Treasurer monthly

### **School-sponsored**

#### **Pros**

1. Support of local school
2. Access to regular meeting place
3. Post notices on bulletin boards
4. Use school bank account and TAX ID
5. Utilize school facilities
6. Eases communication
7. Count service hours for school hours
8. Nominated by teacher to join
9. Live in same community
10. Table at Club Sign in Day

#### **Cons**

- Need principal approval to start a club
- Convince teacher to commit extra time as Advisors
- Teacher is not an Altrusan
- Co-mingled school funds makes reconciliation difficult
- Obtain approvals to using facilities
- Limits interaction with young people from other schools
- Service projects may be limited or directed by school
- Restricts participation
- Limits learning useful life skills
- Consent prior to using school name

### **ASTRA Contacts 2005 - 2007**

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