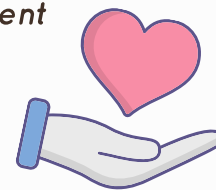


ASTRA IS AMAZING!

MAY
2021| VOL. 6

International ASTRA Newsletter: created by International ASTRA Committee
ASTRA: Ability-Service-Training-Responsibility-Achievement

We build future leaders and service-minded citizens!



Thank you!

ASTRA members and Altrusans grow in leadership and service this biennium!

Young people don't realize when they join ASTRA how much they will learn, grow in confidence, and how transformative ASTRA is.

Students may join ASTRA because they think it will look good on their resume or because they want to make friends with new people or because they want to help in their community or because they think they might be able to get a new leadership role....or even because they were dragged along by a friend and they ended up liking the group too. These are all great reasons!

Young adults are passionate about giving of themselves and making a difference. ASTRA is the perfect avenue for them! They dream big and are not inhibited by obstacles. They have fun tackling problems.

We need more ASTRA clubs! It's not about the *number* of clubs. It's about us sharing our talents, expertise and perspective with these young people who are eager to make their own impact on the world so that they can carry on our good works in their own ways, helping people and making communities stronger. Doing what we do....

ASTRA members who are able to work with Altrusans comment over and over about the bonds of friendship created with the Altrusans, the encouragement they received that made a difference for them, the outright learning as we taught them how to do things, the courage and confidence they gained when standing in front of an audience speaking because we told them we knew they could do it.

As Tucker Saxton, a young professional ASTRA-to-Altrusan on our International ASTRA Committee who is newly married, busy working, and contributing to Altrusa has stated, "ASTRA can be life-changing to an ASTRA member and they might not realize it until years later. Plant the seeds. Water them. And watch them grow."

It truly has been my honor and privilege to work with ASTRA for 15 years and to have served as the International ASTRA Chair. This is important. It makes a difference. Let's keep growing!

-Debbie McBee, International ASTRA Chair

ASTRA ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2019-2021:

- 5 new ASTRA clubs chartered in NC, TX & PR
- ASTRA Marketing video created
- ASTRA Alumni Database created and alumni connected with clubs
- Initiated District ASTRA Chairs zoom meetings
- Created Universal ASTRA Service Project: "Letters to Strangers"
- Promoted ASTRA-to-Altrusa and Young Professionals focus
- Revised ASTRA Advisors Manual
- Revised ASTRA Club Annual Report
- Created new ASTRA Leadership Manual, ASTRA Committee Chairs Responsibilities guide, Robert's Rule of Order for ASTRA, Annual Calendar, and more! Spanish and French translations added
- Increased ASTRA communication with newsletters, emails and social media posts
- Increased ASTRA participation in District conferences in at least nine districts
- Awarded high school and (new) college/university scholarships
- Updated and awarded ASTRA Service Awards
- ASTRA website resources updated
- Performed service -and lots more!

LET'S KEEP GROWING!

DISTRICT THREE ASTRA

by Kitty McElhaney, Governor

District Three is home to 12 ASTRA clubs of several types: Middle School, High School, College/University and Community.

This exemplifies the flexibility for Altrusa Clubs to sponsor ASTRA Clubs that fit the need of the community. Activities range from fundraising to support projects to enhancing understanding of the world they live in.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ASTRA:

Epiphany ASTRA Club, of Lake City, FL, was able to modify its service activities to comply with COVID-19 protocols and to allow members to participate safely. The Club organized several outside campus Clean Up days. The Club, comprised of middle school students, also planned and hosted an Easter Egg Hunt for the younger students.



“

Principal and ASTRA Advisor Rita Klenk emphasized the importance of ASTRA this year, *“Nothing was normal due to Covid. It was important to have our ASTRA club to provide some extracurricular activities for students as well as some sense of normalcy.”*

”

UNIVERSITY ASTRA:

The **ASTRA Club of Gainesville, FL, Inc.**, a part of the **University of Florida**, has implemented Field and Fork, a program at the University of Florida (UF) aimed to provide free, nutritious food to members of UF who are in need. The Field and Fork Farm and Gardens is where all of the fresh produce is grown. Whatever is grown in this location is sent to the Food Pantry where members of the UF community who are in need can have easy access to free and nutritious food. Throughout the years, our ASTRA club has volunteered with Field and Fork, both at the Farm and in the Pantry. With the impact that Covid-19 has had on our community, it was especially important for our club to ensure that students at UF were being provided with plenty of fresh food.



HIGH SCHOOL ASTRA:

ASTRA high school representatives of the **Spartanburg, SC Day School** met with associate professor Dr. Araceli Hernandez-Laroche to discuss women's history, impact, pay equity and the Latinx community.

Community service projects include:

- clothing teddy bears for the Salvation Army,
- creating and delivering Valentine's Day cards to a nursing home,
- participating in teacher appreciation week, and
- walking for the March of Dimes.



Forest High School ASTRA- Ocala, FL

COMMUNITY ASTRA:

ASTRA of Charlotte, NC is a Community Club. They have done many service projects this year, but some of their favorites have been:

- making blankets for rescue/shelter animals,
- feeding first responders and front line hospital workers during the pandemic,
- Make a Difference Day environmental cleanup project at a local elementary school,
- writing inspirational messages on the boxes for the homeless shoe drive, and
- partnering with Altrusa in support of their Angel Tree project.

Despite the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the club has worked hard to find ways to safely make an impact in their community.



“We “grew-up” in Altrusa and were looking to give back to the community with our peers. With ASTRA, we have the opportunity to develop and practice our leadership skills while doing hands-on service projects that have a positive impact both locally and globally. ”

Photo: Sebastian (L) and Tristan (R) Rivest

ASTRA SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS - 2021

*College/University Scholarships of \$1000 from
Altrusa International Foundation are awarded to:*

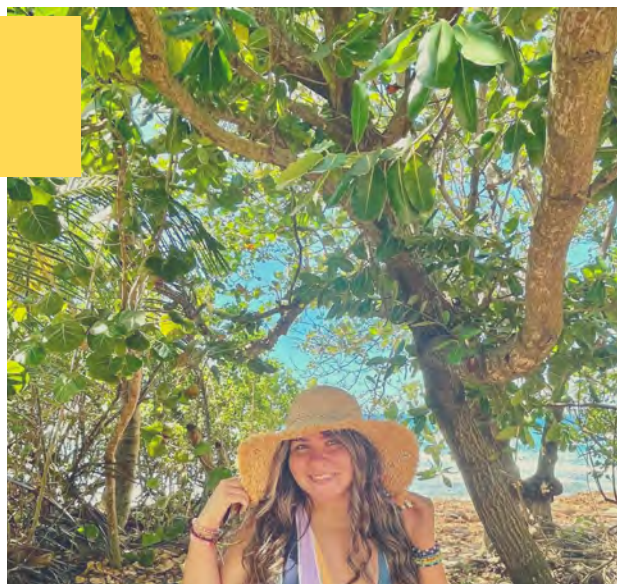


ATNEL NATIALI SANTIAGO

Atnel is a 3 year ASTRA member and current Club Treasurer of the ASTRA Club of Yauco, Puerto Rico (District Fourteen). He is earning a Bachelors degree in Marketing at the University of Puerto Rico in Ponce .

NATALIA PEREZ CINTRON

Natalia has been an ASTRA member of the ASTRA Club of Yauco, Puerto Rico for six years, both in high school and in college. She has served as club President three times, including this year. Natalia is a sophomore studying Accounting at the University of Puerto Rico in Ponce and plans to become a CPA. (District Fourteen)



Please Note: The International ASTRA Committee thanks the two judges panels, for high school and for college/university scholarships. Each panel consisted of three non-Altrusa and two Altrusa judges. Altrusans did not serve as judges if they had an association with an ASTRA Club. Debbie McBee, ASTRA Committee Chair, also did not serve as a judge nor were any judges from Oregon.



GIANCARLO HERNANDO

Giancarlo has belonged to the Manuel Méndez Liciaga Vocational High School ASTRA Club (District Fourteen) for four years and is the club President. He will be attending the University of Puerto Rico Mayagüez Campus to study Software Engineering. (\$2000)

SIDNEY SCHREIER

Sidney has been a member of the ASTRA Club of Pendleton, OR (District Twelve) for four years and is the club Vice President and Service Chair. She plans to major in Biochemistry and minor in art and psychology at Queen's University in Toronto, Canada with the intent to become a Trauma surgeon. (\$2000)



SEBASTIAN RIVEST

Sebastian is a charter member of the Charlotte ASTRA Club in Charlotte, NC (District Three) and is the current Club President. He plans to study Mechanical Engineering at North Carolina State University. (\$1000)

CAMILLE DELA CRUZ

Camille has been a member of the ASTRA Club of Roseburg, OR (District Twelve) for four years. She is the current club President and has served before. Camille plans to major in Nursing with pre-med and possibly minor in either business or Spanish at the University of Portland. (\$1000)



Feature: ASTRA Club of Pendleton, OR

CELEBRATING IT'S 15TH YEAR

Who would have thought that the past year would be remembered by COVID-19, distance learning, ASTRA meetings in the park with masks on and eventually zoom meetings...but our ASTRA members are resilient and still eager to serve! Getting together for ASTRA meetings became a celebration. ASTRA members performed service every month, including:

- packaging face masks for citizens in need
- making denim shoes for kids in Uganda
- placing positive sideways chalk art at all school entries
- buying supplies for the Warming Center
- buying, wrapping (in 20 degree weather outside), and delivering gifts for two families
- buying and delivering diapers and wipes for Pioneer Relief Nursery
- collecting baby board books for newborns
- writing cards to veterans
- loading boxes of books in preparation for the local library sale.

Even during a pandemic, they make a difference!



Our newest ASTRA Club: ASTRA Club of Austin, TX

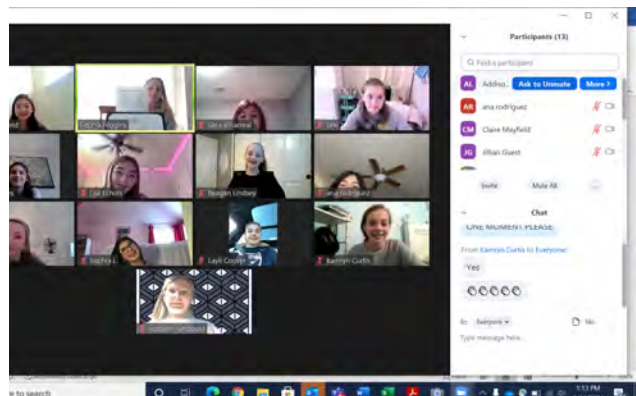
-by Karen Higgins, ASTRA Advisor
Chartered in December 2020;
Virtual Ceremony in February 2021

Our newest ASTRA club is a community club in District Nine, the ASTRA Club of Austin, TX. They filed all their paperwork last fall and scheduled their charter ceremony for December, but due to the worsening pandemic as well as multiple Texas power outages, they had to postpone it. They eventually held a charter ceremony by zoom in February.

Despite the challenges, these new ASTRA members have been busy doing many service projects, including:

- collecting 300 cans for the canned food drive
- preparing and delivering Valentine's treat boxes
- assembled and delivered Easter baskets to foster families as a joint project with their sponsoring Altrusa Club

They are excited to be serving their community! Welcome!





ASTRA INFO
THAT'S GOOD TO
KNOW!

SUMMER DATES!

JUNE 1: ASTRA CLUB ANNUAL REPORT

→ WAS SENT OUT BY EMAIL ON 4/22
AND NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED ONLINE BY THE
ALTRUSAN ASTRA ADVISOR OF EACH ASTRA CLUB

JULY 15: ASTRA ALUMNI SURVEY

We have created an ASTRA Alumni Database of current and
former ASTRA members who are ages 18 and older.
We ask your help in distributing the brief online survey
so that we can stay connected with them periodically!
Email astra@altrusa.org if you want the survey sent to you to
share with ASTRA alumni.

CONSIDERING SPONSORING A NEW ASTRA CLUB?

GREAT IDEA! THIS SPRING AND SUMMER IS A GREAT TIME TO START
MAKING PLANS. CONNECT WITH STUDENTS, HOLD AN INTEREST
MEETING, GET YOUR ALTRUSA ASTRA COMMITTEE TOGETHER WITH
3-4 ALTRUSANS, AND WORK WITH YOUR SCHOOL OR COMMUNITY
TO CHARTER THIS COMING SCHOOL YEAR!

We have all the resources you need on our ASTRA website:

<https://astra.altrusa.org>

"BY THE NUMBERS"

86 ASTRA CLUBS

ASTRA CLUBS BY DISTRICT:

- District One: 2 clubs
- District Two: 2 clubs
- District Three: 12 clubs (1 new this biennium)
- District Four: 5 clubs (1 in formation)
- District Five: 6 clubs
- District Six: 1 club
- District Seven: 6 clubs
- District Eight: 6 clubs
- District Nine: 11 clubs (2 new this biennium)
- District Ten: 6 clubs
- District Eleven: 6 clubs
- District Twelve: 2 clubs (2 in formation)
- District Fourteen: 17 clubs (2 new this biennium)
- District Fifteen: 2 clubs
- Altrusa of India: 2 clubs



ASTRA MEMBER CODY FRIESER OF THE ASTRA CLUB OF CHARLOTTE, NC CARRYING THE ASTRA FLAG AT THE 2021 DISTRICT THREE CONFERENCE

The ASTRA Clubs of Yauco, Puerto Rico and Pendleton, Oregon have struck up a supportive friendship! They held a joint zoom meeting in April to get to know each other better and share ideas.



SHOULD YOUR ALTRUSA CLUB SPONSOR AN ASTRA CLUB?



*Excerpt from article originally published
in the July 2020 Altrusa Compass*

The short answer: YES! The long answer:
Definitely yes! Let me tell you why.

Megan Lauer is a poster child (now adult) for the significance of you starting an ASTRA Club. In high school, Megan was a strong student and already belonged to Key Club, the National Honor Society and a few other groups. When ASTRA was going to start at her high school as a newly chartering club, she knew even though she was a quiet reserved student that she wanted to try ASTRA. She was still missing something with her activities and hoped ASTRA would be the right fit and would develop her further.

ASTRA gave Megan opportunities to perform service with her friends, as well as people she had never interacted with in school, every month. She was able to help design and plan projects and could see



*If I had never been in
ASTRA, I know that I
never would have
taken on any
leadership roles....
ASTRA made a
difference in my life.*

the impact in her community and even abroad. She built self-confidence and shared her voice with other club members. She got to practice leadership in a safe environment with mentors to guide her. Megan really connected with some of the Altrusans on the ASTRA Committee and was encouraged by them as they worked together during meetings and on service projects.

As Megan states, "If I had never been in ASTRA, I know that I never would have taken on any leadership roles. I couldn't see myself doing that. ASTRA made a difference in my life. When I went to college, I immediately joined a service club, ran for an officer position and was elected Club Treasurer. I never would have considered that without my time in ASTRA."

Megan went on to pursue an MBA and started working... Megan became an Altrusan in 2016. She was elected Club President in 2019 and is currently running for the District Board. She has many years of wonderful opportunities that lie ahead in Altrusa, but she has already made a huge impact—and is only in her early 30's.

There are many "Megan's" out there who need you! Start an ASTRA Club!

Our young people need your mentorship and the rich opportunities that we can provide them to grow in leadership and service.

What do you need to start?
Interest...and three or four
enthusiastic Altrusans!



Melissa Kolesar

I grew up in an environment where my mother was deeply involved in Altrusa which made me curious. Seeing how much my mother enjoyed helping the community, I decided to join the ASTRA club of McKeesport while I was in high school. One of my most enjoyable memories from ASTRA is tutoring fifth graders from the middle school several times a week. It was such a thrill when they showed me their report cards with an improved grade. I am now a member and secretary for the past two years at the Altrusa International McKeesport club, where I am really enjoying serving the community. I am newly married with my second wedding anniversary just coming up. My husband and I just purchased a house. We are enjoying settling into our home and gardening together.

Thank You!!! from Debbie

TO THE INTERNATIONAL ASTRA COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Vice Chair Lorraine Brewer, Sylvia Juarbe, Scott Tice,
Germaine Vonderhaar, Tucker Saxton, Ande Scott --
and International Board Rep Maureen McGough

Thank you for your incredible energy and dedication to ASTRA! I loved our dynamic meetings, our brainstorming, our dreams, our debates, our drive, our accomplishments. Each one of you brought unique and valuable skill, insight and contributions to our ASTRA team. Despite the pandemic, we made great strides. I am so blessed to have been able to work with you. You're amazing!

TO OUR DISTRICT ASTRA CHAIRS & OUR ASTRA ADVISORS:

Trish Maxim (District One), Cindy Jennings (District Two), Scott Tice (District Three), Connie Hunley (District Four), Germaine Vonderhaar (District Five), June Kramer (District Six), Vici Giltner (District Seven), Terry Eakins (District Eight), Sylvia Zamora (District Nine), Linda Dysart (District Ten), Kathy Telleria (District Eleven), Mirza Acosta and Carmen Irizarry (District Fourteen), Robyn Moore (District Fifteen) & all ASTRA Advisors

Thank you for your dedication to ASTRA and your district. You are the critical link to making everything happen in ASTRA! I loved our zoom meetings, and appreciate all of your questions, suggestions, photo sharing, problem solving, inspiration, guidance given to clubs and determination that you show for ASTRA. Thank you!

TO OUR INTERNATIONAL STAFF:

Tanika, Wyneisha, David and Shawna:

Without you, we could not do what we do. Thanks for sharing your expertise and making things happen for ASTRA-- and for patiently teaching me the ropes :)

TO OUR INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT BEVERLY:

You are an amazing woman and leader. I have learned so much from you as you led our organization through these challenging times with unwavering purpose. Your deep dedication both to ASTRA and to Altrusa is inspirational.

With heartfelt gratitude, thank you!

2019 - 2021



A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BEVERLY

When I became International President in July of 2019, one of my main goals was ASTRA. With ASTRA, each member has the power to make things really happen! ASTRA provides a uniquely supportive setting to share personal talents in a way that benefits our communities through service and leadership. It provides opportunities for personal development, leadership training, cultural awareness and citizenship development while actively fostering the concept of service. I am convinced that ASTRA is the future of Altrusa. If we can transition our young ASTRA members to Altrusa, when they leave ASTRA, Altrusa will thrive going forward with their youthful enthusiasm.

This biennium, the International ASTRA Committee has been “on fire” under Chair Debbie McBee’s leadership. The entire Committee has been exceptional. One example that is especially special is two members of the International ASTRATeam, Tucker Saxton and Ande Scott, who were former ASTRA members and are now outstanding Altrusa members of Altrusa International, Inc of Temple, TX.

Young people have the power to change the world...and we need them to! We live in a world faced with huge challenges. ASTRA members are a huge part of the solution. When I see the commitment of young people who are determined to make a difference, I am optimistic about the future of our Organization. The future is ours to write. Their actions go a long way to solving problems now. I know through ASTRA we will discover our own ability and channel our energy to impact change. Never underestimate the power of one person to make a difference! When we work together as a TEAM WE WILL MAKE OUR DREAM WORK! What we can achieve as a group is/will be astounding!

Please, let’s applaud this biennium’s work to advance ASTRA. One has only to look on our International website under the ASTRA tab to see the multiple additions and updates that our International Team has accomplished. I knew in the beginning this committee would achieve great strides and they did not disappoint!! So, it is with much pride and humility that I say “good job”; Debbie McBee, Lorraine Brewer, Sylvia Juarbe, Ande Scott, Tucker Saxton, Scott Tice and Germaine Vonderhaar from all the Altrusa membership.

With love and gratitude to the International ASTRA Committee,
Beverly Hardy, President Altrusa International