



# The Gainesville Altrusan

Newsletter for Altrusa International of Gainesville, FL, Inc

**Outstanding Alachua County Volunteer Civic Organization  
2010 "Work of Heart" Award**

**Home Club of 2009-2011 International Altrusa President,  
Donna Johnson**

**August 2025**

***A recap of the previous month (July)  
and a look ahead***

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For many years our club has been recognized at District Three Conferences for newsletter (Kim Pace, editor), ASTRA, Literacy Awards, Earnestine Miller Program Excellence and Outstanding Community Service.

**Helpful Hint: If you find any font size too small for your comfort, please use the zoom function on your computer or device to enlarge text.**

## **Newsletter Staff**

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## **President's Message**

Most of us have multiple names or titles, including our legal name, preferred name, and family names, as well as titles such as Mr. or Mrs., Doctor, or President. I am going to finally claim a new title- I confess, I am a Serial Crafter. This is a person who sees a new craft or project, pays money to take a class or two, and THEN spends way too much money on supplies or tools. One of my more recent "I can do that" projects was stained glass – took the class, bought A LOT of tools and glass, made three pieces. Those supplies were then relegated to a box in the garage until I gave them away. The list goes on and on.

As a serial crafter, my Pinterest folders are filled with projects--baby presents, Halloween ideas, easy sewing projects, and many more. In truth I would say less than 1% of these tagged projects see fruition. All of this to say, we are looking for small, 1-hour projects that can be finished during a meeting. With the change in our meeting structure (no longer providing lunch), we are exploring ways to make meetings more engaging and enjoyable. On the Altrusa International page, there is a list of 100+ service projects that can be done in an hour. Copy this URL into your browser and take a look at the list.

<https://login.altrusa.org/files/2024/01/100-Service-Project-Ideas.pdf>

We will rotate between a regular program and a service project but not necessarily every other meeting.

If you have an idea for a project, do some research to determine how it can be used in our community. Reach out to a school or other non-profit agency for suggestions. Then, create a list of supplies that will be donated by members at the time of the project. No club funds will be used for these small projects. Once you have all the details, send the information to me and I will forward it to our Project Director for him to present to the board for approval. Once approved, the member who made the suggestion will be notified. We will approve as many as we can and then build them into the meeting rotations. The project will be announced in advance of the meeting so members can buy/bring supplies. The project is worked on at a meeting and will be gathered at the end of the meeting by the project facilitator and distributed to the beneficiaries.

Your project proposal needs to include: a description of the project; the beneficiary; supplies needed; project facilitator name, phone and email. If you have any questions about this process, please let me know. In Altrusa Friendship,  
Dee

# SO WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

Lily and Hannah have spent wonderful summer weeks at Camp Crystal "forever."



This photo is to remind us of what a good work Festival of Trees is as it supports the camp and Altrusa House. Get on Ginny's bandwagon to help prep for the Country Store and for the event itself. We need you.

Time is flying by and we have been gearing up our activities for the Festival of Trees as we work together to make it a success along with the Gainesville Woman's Club. Tickets are now available for \$40 per person and Sara has the tickets available for purchase. The gift tree is in process of being made and as always we need donations of gift cards. Bottles of wine are always welcome too. Below from Ginny are pictures of one of the simple holiday crafts—sets of four coasters-- to be sold in the Santa Shop that all of us can do at home or at a future club meeting.

All supplies will be provided.



At our July 14 meeting we heard committee reports from last year. (Dee will email a summary to members.) We also discussed at length and then voted to try the Umbrella Plan for the coming year. Please see page 3.



"Everything should be made as simple as possible but not simpler." Einstein



**North Florida Sewing Center** Methodist Church 826 NW 23rd Avenue. Park in the church's west side lot. (Dee is contact)  
**Bread of the Mighty** 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month we can work the assembly line preparing boxes of food.  
**Women Build** lunches have ended for the season but keep your recipes ready for the fall build (house #19).

- ✓ Non-recyclable tops and lids for AH art projects (Sara is contact)
- ✓ For Displaced Homemakers: gas cards, canned meats, Progresso soups with meat, saltines, jelly, fruit cups, individual boxes of cereal, nuts, microwavable pasta, canned corn and beans (Shea is contact)
- ✓ Children's and young adult books and women's inspirational and spiritual books for Majestic Oaks (Carolyn is contact)
- ✓ Suggested fabrics and supplies for Sewing Center (Dee is contact)
- ✓ Clothes for SWAG and Grace (Carolyn is contact)



# What's Coming Up



14 Becky Munden  
18 Marcia Utz  
22 Shea Huey  
27 Bea Awoniyi  
28 Dee Dugger  
29 Carole Oglesby  
(Emeritus)

THE GAINESVILLE WOMAN'S CLUB  
Annual Bazaar & Vendor Faire  
GREAT DEALS!

household items, antiques,  
jewelry, collectables  
multiple vendors, and much more

FRIDAY AUGUST 15 9 AM-6PM  
SATURDAY AUGUST 16 9 AM-6 PM

“There is nothing  
more powerful  
than an idea  
whose time  
has come.”

— Victor Hugo

Suggestions from Board Project and Fundraising Director, Bob Pearcy:

- Plan each year fully making a time-line calendar of projects Including estimated funds needed.
- Appoint a chair for the project.
- The chair for each project forms a committee of any club members who wish to participate in that project and keeps the club involved and apprised.
- Evaluate each project to access what worked and what needs tweaking and plan fresh each year.



Dee emphasized that along with our major projects members are encouraged to spearhead small “parasol projects” that can be done by us at meetings. If you know of a community need or member need that can be met this way and have brainstormed or borrowed an idea, bring the idea to Dee and she will help get it launched.

Please note venue change for our first August meeting and that we've returned to meeting every 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday. Bring your water and lunch if you wish or plan some group lunch gatherings after meetings.

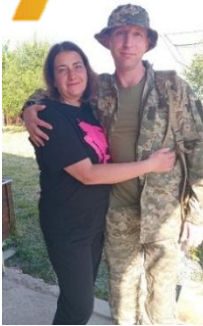
## On August 14 we will be meeting at Elder Options

100 SW 75<sup>th</sup> St Suite 301 (all the way to the back as before). Johnnie Jones III, Caregiver Support Coordinator for Elder Options will be our speaker. Because of Altrusa House this promises to be an interesting presentation for us.

On August 28 we will be back at the Woman's Club to learn about possible projects for the upcoming year, adjust the “umbrella” as needed, and hopefully have some time to visit with each other and perhaps go out for some small group lunches.



Under the umbrella, subcommittees will be formed as needed to carry out these service projects as voted on by the club.



My dear Altrusa friends, I hope you are doing well. I am translating some letters from the families we were able to help in Ukraine. I am sharing one of the letters with you today. We sent \$1000, boxes of clothing and wound care supplies you donated to our good friend Galyna Andrievska, she is a leading member of the volunteer group "WeAreTogether". She was able to help three families who lost their loved ones. Galyna wrote, "I know these families, these people who are very close to me, they used to be happy, they were raising children, had jobs, built houses, they dreamed..."

Marina is a very good mother and wife, she takes care of the children, keeps in touch and supports her husband's mother and his sister.

Her mother-in-law fell seriously ill from grief...This is Marina's story."

Hello dear unknown but caring Altrusa friends in America! Thank you for helping me and my children. My name is Marina. I am 38 years old and reside in a small town Boguslav in Ukraine. I work at a weaving factory, where I met my beloved future husband, Ivan – affectionately known to all as Vanyushka. When we met, I was a single mother to three-year-old Stefania from my first marriage. Stefania immediately embraced Ivan, calling him "daddy," as her biological father had abandoned us and maintained no contact. We married, and a year later, our son Yegor was born, completing our cherished family.

Today, Stefania is a thriving 13-year-old, excelling in 7th grade and pursuing her passion for dance after school. Yegor, nearly nine, has completed 2nd grade and has a great love for hockey.

Ivan was mobilized in early 2024, undergoing military training before being deployed to combat in the Donetsk region. On November 9, 2024, during intense artillery shelling, my Vanyushka sustained a severe abdominal wound. A fellow soldier who witnessed his fall believed it to be fatal. He managed to capture a photo, which he later conveyed to me, and in it, I recognized my dear Vanyushka. Tragically, as my husband lay wounded, his commander ordered a battalion retreat, preventing his comrades from returning to retrieve him from the battlefield. He is now officially considered "missing in action." In Ukraine, this designation carries a devastating consequence: without a soldier's presence or body, the family receives no government assistance.

I recall Vanyushka's plea before he left for war; he asked me to promise strength, to believe that no harm would befall him, and that we would be reunited. I pledged to be strong and to believe, and I strive to uphold that promise, though it is incredibly difficult. We navigate this horrific wartime without our protector. Our children profoundly miss him, constantly asking when their Daddy will return, a question that pierces my heart. Vanyushka was an extraordinary father and husband. This year marked what should have been our tenth wedding anniversary, and I deeply yearned to celebrate it with him and our children.

Our lives feel shattered. I endeavor to remain a steadfast and supportive mother and daughter-in-law, but the burden is heavy and the pain profound. I love my Vanyushka immensely, and my love for him will never wane. I am eternally grateful to God for the gift of his presence in my life! I continue to cling to hope, refusing to believe my Vanyushka is gone. Perhaps he was taken prisoner; he was not deceased when his friend last saw him. Therefore, hope endures. I pray and believe in a miracle.

Thank you again for your kindness and for your generosity. May good people be with you in the time of need too.

Sincerely,

Marina, Dohova



President: Dee Dugger  
 1<sup>st</sup> VP (Awards): Sara Freeborn  
 2<sup>nd</sup> VP (Programs): Pat Kilby  
 Treasurer: Tobi Doering  
 Recording Secretary: Marcia Utz  
 Director of Projects and Fundraisers: Bob Percy  
 Membership Director: Harriet Buxbaum  
 Immediate Past President: Carolyn Harrell  
 Director of Communications TBD



**Our purpose is to better our community  
 by bringing together volunteers  
 to identify and meet needs of our local area  
 through service and leadership.**

Our club and Altrusa House always support and table at this event. Please see Lisa Renner for more information.

**You are invited to celebrate  
 WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY  
 Gainesville, Florida 2025  
 Date: Saturday, August 23, 2025 11:30 a.m.  
 Best Western Gateway Grand  
 4200 NW 97th Blvd., Gainesville 32606**

The featured speaker is Dr. Jeanna Mastrodicasa, Director of the Office of Institutional Assessment at UF, who will share the ways Women's Giving Circle at Community Foundation has had a profound and positive impact on many non-profit organizations supporting women and girls for the last 20 years.

**This luncheon is organized by the Friends of Susan B. Anthony.**  
**Questions? Contact 352-378-6447 or visit the [webpage](#).**

Luncheon (\$35) selections include chicken marsala or eggplant parmesan, both served with a salad, rolls, and dessert. Please indicate if you have other dietary restrictions.

Please note: Our whole club does not meet for monthly business meetings. Along with announcements from club members about items of need or interest, we usually focus on Accents, speakers and service projects.

Business is taken up in monthly board meetings but, as stated in the bylaws, some items such as club fundraisers, club projects, board selection and budget are presented to the entire club for discussion and voting. PDF minutes of a board meeting can be requested from the club president.

Any club member wishing to attend a zoom board meeting to present an agenda item or just to see how a board meeting works (with a view of perhaps considering a board position) should contact Dee a week prior to the meetings, which are the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm.

Any member wishing to nominate an Unsung Hero can text or email that information any time to Dee Dugger to present to the board. Anything a club member might want included in the newsletter can be sent to Carolyn Harrell before the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month. Thank you.

#### DISTRICT THREE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Governor Mantha Young Lake City, FL [AltrusaDistrictThreeGovernor@gmail.com](mailto:AltrusaDistrictThreeGovernor@gmail.com)  
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 Director Dee Dugger Gainesville, FL [Ladydragonfly54@gmail.com](mailto:Ladydragonfly54@gmail.com)  
 Director Randi Kahl Orlando, FL [Randi\\_altrusa@yahoo.com](mailto:Randi_altrusa@yahoo.com)  
 Director Rosemary Leake Spartanburg, SC [Rosemary1976@msn.com](mailto:Rosemary1976@msn.com)  
 Secretary Nanci Schwartz Lake County [napschwartz@gmail.com](mailto:napschwartz@gmail.com)  
 Parliamentarian Penny Penn North GA [ppenn04@yahoo.com](mailto:ppenn04@yahoo.com)



Please keep in touch online with District Three and International:  
[districtthreealtrusa.org](http://districtthreealtrusa.org)      [facebook.com/AltrusaD3](https://facebook.com/AltrusaD3)      [altrusa.org](http://altrusa.org)



# Congratulations to Harriet Buxbaum

## Altrusan of the Year 2025

And Harriet has a new address:  
2474 NW 77th Blvd. Apt 5022  
Gainesville. 32606  
Please make a note.

A few candid photos from Cherise (starting top right)  
tell the story of the presentation:



Above and left  
it took two tries  
but here comes  
the smile.

*And look to  
the right to  
see Freddie!  
A great day.*



Above and left  
Harriet can't  
believe it but she  
makes her way  
up front then is  
overcome.

If one pays attention, you will notice that almost every time there is a request for volunteers to do something for Altrusa, one name consistently appears. It may be to provide something delicious for an Altrusa luncheon meeting or for the Women Build project. It may be to help with our Music Trivia Bingo fundraiser or to read weekly with children at Williams Elementary School. This year, she took on a new task: recruiting the presenters for the Altrusa Middle School Literacy Awards at all of the middle schools. She is frequently found helping with a task that didn't even have a sign-up list – like always staying after luncheon meetings to help with the cleanup.

Although she is one of the most active volunteers in our club, she is also one of the friendliest and most humble. Her unwavering dedication and impactful contributions to our organization and the wider community over the past four years truly exemplify the spirit of Altrusa International.

Her commitment to literacy is nothing short of extraordinary and extends far beyond simple participation. She has been a driving force behind numerous initiatives, including coordinating volunteers for the Literacy Committee at Williams School, supporting kindergarten and first-grade classrooms, along with the crucial attendance initiative. Her generous donations and tireless efforts have been instrumental to the committee's success, and her impact on the lives of young students is immeasurable. Furthermore, her leadership in recruiting Altrusans to present literacy awards at nine middle schools demonstrates her exceptional ability to inspire and mobilize others.

Beyond her dedication to literacy, her contributions to Altrusa House are equally impressive. Her weekly volunteer work, incorporating engaging literacy activities that integrate pictures, art, stories, and music, brings joy and enrichment to the lives of our clients. Her warmth, compassion, and genuine care for those she serves are profoundly moving.

Harriet's leadership has extended to serving on our club board as Director of Projects & Fundraisers, where she continues to make significant contributions. Her selfless acts, such as preparing meals for the Women's Build and our Altrusa Club, further highlight her commitment to community and collaboration.

In conclusion, Harriet Buxbaum's tireless dedication to literacy, her compassionate service at Altrusa House, her active involvement on our Altrusa Board, and her unwavering commitment to our shared values make her an exceptionally deserving candidate for Altrusan of the Year 2025. She truly embodies the ideals of our organization.



## Our Club's Anchor Project Since 1998

### Altrusa House Board Officers

**President:** Bennye Alligood

**Vice-President:** Fran Vandiver

**Treasurer:** Shea Huey

**Secretary:** Sara Freeborn

**Altrusa House Director:** Lee Johnson

Please visit Altrusa House website and Facebook (and like/love it) each time.

<https://altrusahouse.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/altrusahouse/>

(The entire board meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday each month at Altrusa House)

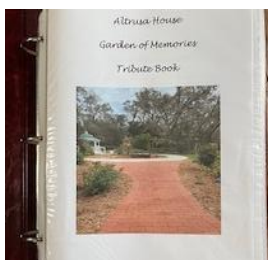
In case you've been curious about all those bottle caps with which you've graced Sara, below (I) is just a hint of the oceans of donations that are just Carolyn's latest acquisitions. Multiply this by scores and scores that reside with Sara and you'll know a project or two is going to emerge.

Below are just a few ideas of what Altrusans, Altrusa House Board and clients could do to enhance the gardens and be kind to our planet. These look so cool and fun.



Check with the staff about when you might drop by for a little while to say hello and visit a bit...bring some treats...prepare and share a short slide show of your travels ...read...help with art projects...play games...see what's going on. Lee or Lisa can give you guidance and suggest times. Stay tuned for ideas the board is considering. A future Thurs meeting will focus on Altrusa House. Meanwhile Bennye, Fran and Harriet are good information sources as well. The AH clients can make your day (and you might make theirs)!

*The Garden of Memories pathway is constructed of engraved commemorative 4" x 8" brick pavers placed within the landscaped grounds to honor or remember special person(s) including clients, families, friends, and supporters of Altrusa House. Anyone may sponsor an engraving in a paver for a minimum of \$150. Additionally, anyone who wishes may make a donation in any amount and be listed as a donor in our continually updated Tribute Book which also lists all brick recipients.*



*Altrusa House is a 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit organization. Please contact Carolyn Harrell [harrellland@cox.net](mailto:harrellland@cox.net) for information about planning and placing an engraved brick in the Garden of Memories.*



At our last meeting, a mention was made of collecting school supplies. A member reached out to me and reminded me that quite a few groups collect supplies for students. Could we change our collection to focus on teacher supplies (you know, the ones they purchase out of pocket)?

This member reached out to the principal at Williams Elementary to get a list of supplies.

The board approved this request.

This is a **ONE** meeting donation collection. School starts on August 11, and our meeting is on August 14. Items will be delivered to the school after our meeting and will be given out by the school. All donations greatly appreciated.

The tax-free school supplies dates are August 1-31.

#### **Teacher School Supply List**

- chart paper
- Expo Markers
- index cards
- highlighters
- chart markers
- pens
- white board erasers and cleaner
- sticker books
- fat pink erasers
- staples and staplers
- tissues
- hand sanitizer
- paper towels

If you are buying markers and crayons, please buy name-brand EXPO and Crayola. I know crayons aren't on the list, but Walmart has them for 50 cents a box, just in case you are buying for other sources donations.

There is no way to ensure we don't end up with 24 rolls of paper towels. Buy what you can and know that all donations will be appreciated. Dollar Tree and Walmart have a good selection of items. If your budget allows, consider buying in bulk from Amazon. If you are buying online, check delivery dates to ensure it arrives before our meeting.