

What Happened?

News and Information about our Club.

Jan. / Feb. 2021

President Kris Sherry krissherry@aol.com



Jan. / Feb. Birthdays

Jan 26 Karen McAuley

Jan 26 Vella Lewis

Feb. 12 Anne-Marie Steeneck

A Note from our President...

“When I grow up, I want to be a....”

Have you ever asked a child what they wanted to be when they grew up? Do you remember the dreams or aspirations you had? More than likely you may have said “astronaut”, “fireman”, “ballerina”, “president”, “scientist”, or “doctor”. More than likely you NEVER said “mediocre” or “average”. If this is the case, why do we find ourselves, at times, settling for just that? So many times in life the reason that we don’t succeed is that we make excuses for ourselves that we **believe** really do alter our ability. When we start taking control of our own actions and eliminate excuses from our vocabulary, we give ourselves permission to succeed and persevere.

Here are just a few of the excuses people give themselves for not succeeding.

1. It’s impossible: When faced with an extremely difficult task, it’s natural to want to give up and consider the task to be impossible. If any person has ever done it, you can do it too. If not, you can be the first!
2. I’ve never done it that way: We all have a comfort zone and stepping outside of it can feel like uncomfortable ground. The reason you feel so comfortable in this zone is because you know exactly what to expect. If you never step outside of it though, you can never learn or grow.
3. I’m too busy: Have you ever heard someone use the excuse that the reason that they ran out of gas is because they were too busy driving? Using the excuse that you’re too busy won’t get you any sympathy from anyone, and it won’t get you what you really want. The bottom line is that if something is important to us, we make time for it.
4. I’m not sure it is a very good idea: So often we see great ideas put off because people feel they just don’t know if their idea will fly. Guess what – you won’t know. There is no surefire way to know without a doubt that any business is going to do well. There is one guarantee though: If you don’t even try, you definitely will not succeed.

Thank you all for being “do-ers”. This pandemic has stifled our club in some ways but in others, you all continue to move beyond mediocre or average to excellence. Let’s keep the momentum!

Kris Sherry/Davis

Our **Jan 5.** meeting via Zoom was called to order by President Kris with the following **Altrusa Accent...** Last year's words belong to last year's language, and next year's words await another voice. *T. S. Eliot*

Club Foundation Treasurer Vella let us know that the balance was \$17,002.85. She read a note from Lorrie Healy thanking our Club for the \$500 donation to **Days for Girls** and let us know that we received a Thank You letter from the founder and CEO of Days for Girls.

Club Operating Treasurer Karen M reported that the December 2020 beginning and ending Operating Account balance was \$3,817.05. The Petty Cash balance at the beginning and end of December was \$74.63.

Connie Brown reported for the **Literacy Committee** that we received a *Thank You* note from the **Bella Vista Library** for the \$1,000 donation we donated for their children's programming. They asked us if the donation could be used for children's books instead of for the Scholastic on-line program since there has been difficulty in getting the program set up and working. We agreed to the change.

Connie also let us know that we are in a "pause" mode right now regarding donations of books to schools, but we are prepared to fulfill any requests that do come in! We received several boxes of books from the book drive that the **Thomas Jefferson Elementary School** Librarian spearheaded. And **Clothed with Compassion** also gave us a box of books. We received a donation of books from the **DEB Project** that included many cookbooks in fine condition. Gail contacted the Gravette and Decatur libraries to see if they could use them. Gail took the 6 boxes of cookbooks to the Gravette Library and those books that aren't placed in their permanent collection will be used as a fundraiser for the summer teen program.

Judy let us know that with the aid of our \$500 donation, some **Days for Girls** packages of hygiene kits have made their way to Venezuela. Lorrie has the materials/tasks for making hygiene kits well organized so that you can work in her home and do social distancing. We are hoping to have a project date and time established. Based on the response of members at the meeting, the session would be early in the week and would start at around 9:30 a.m. There is still material needing to be washed, dried, and, if necessary, ironed. You can contact Lorrie (801-699-8669) who will have the material ready for you. She will be happy to leave it on her porch for you.

Tina reported about the **DEB Project**. They provided Christmas presents to more than 50 children who did not receive gifts from any other organization. Sammy wanted to thank Judy Godard for all the work she put in tagging, calling volunteers, organizing, and wrapping, for the Christmas event. Karen M, Christina Bush, Anne-Marie, and Tina also helped make the event a success. The store was closed for two weeks for reorganizing and cleaning. The on-line store is doing well. Sammy thanks everyone who helped during 2020 when over 10,000 snack packs were distributed. Three different school districts were involved, and the project was awarded 2 therapy dogs.

Connie gave us news about **Support Our Soldiers**. We received a *Thank You* note from a deployed soldier who got one of the care packages!

Karen R reported for the **Single Parent Scholarship Fund**. There is not much we can do right now because all face-to-face activity has been suspended. Linda delivered the five \$100 gift cards to the organization for the families we adopted for the Christmas wish lists. Seven Club members delivered books and beanie babies for the holiday party. We received a *Thank You* note for the gift cards and another for the books and beanie babies. During 2020 they helped 163 single parents and their 315 children. Our club will present a \$500 donation for scholarships in March.

On the **Communications** front, Valerie completed the recent newsletter and got newspaper coverage for our donations to the Single Parent Scholarship Fund and Socks and Cookies.

Our newest member, Christina Bush, shared some details about herself in the **New Member Spotlight**.

This Northwest Arkansas native lives with her husband and 2 “fur babies.” Her extended family includes 3 children, 2 of her husband’s and 1 of her own. She works for J B Hunt, building on-line training courses. She is a trained chef and Christina and her husband just opened “The Meatin’ Place” food truck in Gravette! The truck will feature smoked meat made by her husband and sides like mac & cheese, green beans, baked beans and potato salad made by Christina. Look for The Meatin Place on facebook for more about the food truck.



Carla and Sue, the **Autumn’s ReRide** Committee, explained that based on the recommendation by the Ranch’s owner they would like to donate the \$500 that was budgeted for them to the Oak View Animal Clinic for the yearly vaccines for 5 horses. Vella will handle the transaction.

Tina gave the virtual Altrusa Benediction.

On **Jan. 12**, the **Executive Board** Zoom Meeting was held. The meeting was to ascertain the club’s focus for the coming year. Operating Treasurer Karen McAuley reported that we have 23 dues-paying members.

President Kris went through the items in the **2020-2021 Foundation Budget** and reported what had been spent. There was consensus that even though we were not able to do the Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser in 2020, because of COVID-19, we are still in good shape financially due to a decreased demand for dictionaries.

Fundraising?? Since COVID-19 remains a worry, the **Games Day** Committee recommended that we don’t do the event this year. The Board agreed, so there will not be a Games Day fundraiser in 2021. In lieu of the fundraiser it was suggested that we do a **GoFundMe** request in honor of Dr. Seuss’ birthday. The funds raised could be used to buy Dr. Seuss books to donate to libraries.

We hope to do a **Spaghetti Dinner** fundraiser later in 2021. It will probably be a drive-through event, and we will ask our newest member Christina if she could make her food truck available at the site perhaps to sell desserts. It was suggested that we might sell Mystery Bags and extra sauce in the parking lot.

Club Projects were next on the agenda.

Dictionaries – We will contact schools again this year (2021) to see if there is renewed interest in getting dictionaries. If there is still little interest, we will consider dropping or revising it.

Book Barns/Boxes/Shelves will continue. There hasn’t been much activity with them but, again, this is not a good time to assess their value. If anyone is interested in stocking one of the locations, contact Connie.

Support Our Soldiers – The project of making table cards with “Stars for Heroes” was successful and involved 19 Club members. There will be another project planned.

Days for Girls – We should give more emphasis to this and promote picking up buckets of work.

Autumn's ReRide Youth Ranch – The Ranch will be moving to a different site where they will have more room. We will follow developments.

When the Bella **Vista Library** reopens, we will see if we could use their courtyard or meeting room so that we could meet while social distancing.

We will send a sympathy card in recognition of the passing of past district governor Joyce Williams.

The **International Foundation Grant** Cycle deadline will be September 15. A potential grant request for funds for more Chromebooks for Decatur was discussed.

The **District Conference** was to be in Tulsa in April, but it has been suspended. Awards will still be presented so we should think about what awards we want to aim for!

The **International Convention** is still scheduled for July 21 -24, 2021, in Charlotte, North Carolina. But with the world in such turmoil... Who knows!

The **Jan. 19** program meeting via Zoom was called to order by President Kris with the following **Altrusa Accent...** One glance at a book and you hear the voice of another person, perhaps someone dead for 1,000 years. To read is to voyage through time. *Carl Sagan*

President Kris announced that committees will not be reporting during future program meetings. Due to the current COVID-19 situation our activities have been limited so there is often nothing to report!

Today's program was given by **Lizabeth Bryant**, the **Director of Project 479**. Project 479 is under the umbrella of **Reality Check Inc.** The "479" comes from the area code of most of the students.

Her work involves two activities. One is providing 8-to-10-day programs on character education to the Bentonville, Rogers, Springdale, Pea Ridge and Fayetteville school districts.

The other is managing two centers where students come voluntarily to develop projects. Many projects have resulted in items that the students sell via social media and at the annual Christmas Bazaar. The students keep the funds raised by their products. Projects include building furniture, making stained glass, knitting, crocheting, making jewelry, sewing pillowcases and quilts, painting Christmas ornaments, doing reupholstery. In the process of making and selling their products, students are getting practice in reading, writing, math, planning, and sales.

The staff are focused on getting the students to understand how valuable they are and redirect their focus from negative to positive thoughts and behaviors. In the current semester they have provided programs to 2000 students and aided 55 students in the project rooms.

Anne-Marie gave the virtual Altrusa Benediction.

On the evening of **Jan 26th** there was a **Member Chat** and five members "attended". It was fun sharing life hacks and other topics.

Our **Feb. 2**, Zoom meeting was called to order by President Kris with the following **Altrusa Accent...**

Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?

'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat.

'I don't much care where,' said Alice.

'Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat.

'So long as I get SOMEWHERE,' Alice added as an explanation.

'Oh, you're sure to do that,' said the Cat, 'if you only walk long enough.'

Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland

On **Feb. 9th** we made a \$300 presentation to Thomas Jefferson School Librarian Sue Bentel. The money will be used to purchase books by Arkansas authors. From left are President Kris, Sue Bentel the School Librarian, Terri Gather our School Liaison and Savanna Ramsey the Library Aid.



Feb. 4th, we received a wonderful book donation for our literacy projects from the **Lovely Purchase Chapter of DAR** of Bella Vista. Both of our organizations have literacy as a focus and "Together we are stronger". DAR member and former Altrusa Club member Su Lynn Hanson organized the donation. Connie, Gay, and Gail accepted the donation of 167 children's books. The presentation took place at Su Lynn's home.

From left are Su Lynn Hanson, DAR member Jan King, Connie, Gay, DAR Regent Mary Wynne and Gail.

Tina Brandt reported on the **DEB Project**. She received an email from Sammy thanking us for our 2020 contributions and highlighting the Project's accomplishments in 2020. Included were donations of food, clothing, grants, therapy dogs, and an update to the website, debproject.com, that now allows for on-line shopping. All of these accomplishments were done 100% by volunteers. Check out their Facebook page! Vella and Karen M took over pantry items that had been dropped off by club members at the State Farm Office and at Karen's home.

District Eight will have a virtual conference in April. Our Club will donate two of the Altrusa pins to the silent auction that will take place.

On **Feb. 11** we joined a Zoom celebration with 400 others from around the world! We are making a difference for girls in Venezuela by volunteering with the **Days for Girls**.

Kris gave the virtual Altrusa Benediction.

Our **Feb.16** meeting was called to order by President Kris with the following **Altrusa Accent...** Snow was falling, so much like stars filling the dark trees, that one could easily imagine its reason for being was nothing more than prettiness. *Mary Oliver* (Northwest Arkansas was having extremely cold and snowy weather!)

Our program today was presented by **Jake Gibbs, Principal of Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas.** Hope Academy is a charter school that has as its sponsor the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter. It has been established for children who have experienced significant social and emotional trauma caused by things like physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and the death of a parent. Jake said he knows of no other school like it in the country.

It started in August 2020 with kindergarten through third grade students. There is one class in each grade level limited to 10 students. Each class has one teacher and 2 paras. They follow a state approved curriculum which includes art, music, and PE as well as math and language arts. Because of their past experiences the students have had to focus on just trying to survive. This has made a physical impact on their brains and they have not developed the higher order thinking skills of children of a similar age. Parents are assured that, unlike in other places where their children were placed, they would not be called to leave work to pick up their students for behavior difficulties. This is one way to ease parent pressure.

They have zoom sessions with parents where they provide tools to help them parent more effectively. Many of the school's students are adopted or in foster care. Some parents have lived through generational trauma. The sessions are also geared to provided consistency at home and school. Students are picked from a lottery from the Bentonville, Fayetteville, Prairie Grove, Rogers, Silom Springs, and Springdale school districts by Dr. Sarah McKenzie of the University of Arkansas.

Hope Academy is separate from the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter residential on-site school. Though they share certain facilities, the Shelter and Hope Academy students never encounter each other.

Currently there are no opportunities to volunteer in the school.

Linda gave the virtual Altrusa Benediction.

Bits and Pieces

Thank goodness, Connie is on the mend!

Karen Robbin's brother-in-law passed away. We send our prayers.

Gay Kiker's brother-in-law also passed away. Our condolences go to her.

Valerie Katz donated blood (she's type 0 negative). Unfortunately, the phlebotomist hit an artery instead of a vein. It took more than 30 minutes to stop the bleeding.

Christina informed everyone that Walmart is setting up appointments for covid vaccinations.

Our prayers go out to Carla and her husband who is dealing with health issues.

Linda's granddaughter in Illinois was excited to see snow there.

Valerie Katz: Communications valeriekatz567@aol.com

Meetings are held at 11:30 on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month, via Zoom.

Our web-site altrusa-bb.com See us on Facebook www.facebook.com/altrusa8