What Happened?

News and Information about our Club.

Bentonville/Bella Vista

May / June 2026

ALTRUSA International | Leading to a Better Community®
Bentonville/Bella Vista AR Foundation, Inc.

May 1 Roxane Hipwell

June 12 Tina Brandt



President - Linda Krysl lakrysl@aol.com

A Note from our President: To My Altrusa Club,

Valerie ask for one last message from me, so here goes.
It has been my pleasure serving with you for many years.
I love all the projects you all come up with to serve the community.
Keep growing with new members as they come up with new ideas to keep the club going strong. Who knows maybe I'll see you at a conference in the future.

With much love and appreciation for all you have done for me.
Linda Krysl
Ex-President



The meeting on **May 5**, was called to order by President, Linda Krysl, with the following Altrusa Accent… *"My Mama always said life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're going to get".* Forrest Gump

Hugs and best wishes to President Linda as she moves out of state to be close to family. Linda was also our president for 2008-2010. Her service and leadership have been exemplary. We will miss you Linda!

Altrusa International chose literacy as a focus many years ago. Our Club has chosen children's literacy as our focus, and to that end we gave away 5,668 books this past fiscal year! Our local libraries have the best collections of books for kids of all ages. We especially love giving away books in May so children will have books to read all summer. Reading 5 books during the summer can prevent a decline in literacy achievement when school returns.

To promote childhood literacy, Second Lady Usha Vance has launched the 2026 Summer Reading Challenge for kids in kindergarten through 8th grade! Students read 12 books between June 1 and September 4 and log their progress on the White House Summer Reading Challenge Site. Students who read 12 books will receive a personalized certificate, a commemorative 250 bookmark, a prize and a chance to win a trip to the White House!!



Members had a great time giving away free books at the **Bella Vista Library Summer Reading Kickoff.** Thanks to Cheryl, our Library Liaison, for organizing this. We gave away approximately 150 books! Magician George Reader participated with magic shows at 1 & 2:30 PM!



We had a book giveaway at **Decatur Northside Elementary**. All the kids got to choose a book and we left some for the kids who will be going to summer school. Thanks to Karen McAuley for chairing our book swap/giveaway crew.





The small rural Gravette Library recently celebrated their 50th birthday! Their community loves them and we do too. They had a very special lemon poppyseed birthday cake with lemon curd filling. Each layer of the cake was an old-fashioned leather-bound book! We put a special card from Altrusa in the time capsule that will be opened in 25 years. Cheryl and Connie helped serve the cake and punch. Happy Birthday Gravette Public Library!





They had a wonderful two-day Summer Reading Program too!



Connie Brown noted that we need to review the quantity of hardback books we have and sort them at our storage facility. We provide the morning book boxes for R.E. Baker. And the school would like to have 80 new picture books for kindergarten.

Decatur Signature Project—Pat Schrad is looking for potential money in the next budget for SPIRE Kits for teachers, from kindergarten thru third grade. The kits help non-English speakers to learn English. Kits run between $600 to $700 each. A few teachers are using them, and more are needed. They would start with a kit on vowels, eventually teaching them how to read and speak English. These kits are not part of the regular curriculum. Pat is also looking at sets of books for the high school book club. Probably 10 books per set. Students pick the books with approval from a teacher mentoring the book club.

We received a Bright Futures certificate in recognition of our support of the Bright Futures mission and Decatur schools. Connie Brown received 4 boxes of books from **Brightfield Middle School.**

Decatur Scholarship Committee—Sue Sterling submitted our form to a couple of potential students` at Decatur, to receive our scholarship money for ESL and Literacy/Reading.

Our **June 2,** meeting was called to order by President, Linda Krysl, with the following **Altrusa Accent…**
"New and Old Leadership We Appreciate". Linda K

Days for Girls--- Kathy Williamson, let us know, Lorrie Healy *still* needs flannel material. On June 24, Lorrie will be part of a church camp with 180 teenagers. There will be a Days for Girls workshop at that camp to help with kit materials. We received a thank you from **Days for Girls International** for our $1000 donation.

Installation of new Officers: Karen Robbins and Gay Kiker will be Co-Presidents for 2026/2027. Vice President-Marlene Olafson, Recording Secretary-Cheryl Johannsen, Correspondence Secretary-Roxane Hipwell, Operating Treasurer -Karen McAuley. Robin Jara was installed as a director.

The Budget Committee met to develop a budget for 2026/2027. We are looking to increase our library budgets and need to investigate buying books. Our supply is very depleted. We are also looking at alternative options to support Decatur Elementary Schools in the new budget.

The **June 16** meeting was called to order by President, Linda Krysl, with the following **Altrusa accent…**
"Friendship starts with One Hello, then it goes and goes until you know"



We have chosen Sammy Laney and the **DEB Project** as our **Community Partner of the Year** because of their support of our Decatur School Project!!
Sammy gave us an update on their building fund and where they are with their need for a much larger facility. The goal is a 20,000 sq ft building. They need a therapy center with counselors for play therapy, continuing education and training. Having counseling/doctors in one place so the foster families wouldn't have to make appointments at multiple locations. A coffee shop where teens can work and learn about money, how business works and teach them about future job searching. They also need a mentoring program for aging out foster kids--how to balance a check book, how to get a prescription, how to do "adulting". Sammy is looking for corporate donations with the opportunity to have the corporation's name/logo on an interior donor wall. Sammy is also looking at a grant from the state. The state has $10 million to give. The state targets, shelters, food insecurity, and kids, which fits DEB. Sammy is working to submit by the first of July. Grants are hard to get for DEB as they are not nationally recognized and are not working through a church or other corporate factor. DEB has served 57,000 clients in 14 years, since their inception. They have distributed over 203,022 items. They work also with 40 other non-profits/community partners. They get many things in the back door they cannot sell. DEB can then donate x to the men's shelter in Springdale for example. Something might have a tear or paint, and can't be sold, but will work for someone who has nothing. Say your prayers for Sammy. She needs divine intervention to get the grant.



$$$ **Financial Reports:**
Operating Budget—Per Karen McAuley, we have a balance of $ 8599.03
Foundation Budget—Per Terri McClure, we have a balance of $14,872 plus $10,720.29 in our CD.
Sue Sterling and Terri Gaither volunteered to audit both the Operating and Foundation Budgets

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