INSPIRATIONS AND ACCENTS FOR CONFERENCE 2024

RENEW-REIMAGINE-REVITALIZE

FRIDAY BREAKFAST- WELCOME/INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Altrusa Grace: Kathy Schrein
Grace will be printed at end of Program booklet

Inspiration: Lorraine Michelson, Past Governor, Affiliate

John W. Gardner, an activist and author, was the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare under President Lyndon Johnson and recipient of the 1964 Presidential Medal of Freedom. This inspiration is an excerpt from a speech with a theme about self-renewal that he delivered in 1990 and fits our conference theme of Renew-Reimagine-Revitalize.

Mr. Gardner shared with his audience the following:

"I'm going to talk about "Self-Renewal". One of your most fundamental tasks is the renewal of the organizations you serve.... But this morning, I want to help you think about yourselves....

Not long ago, I read a splendid article on barnacles. I don't want to give the wrong impression of the focus of my reading interests. Sometimes days go by without my reading about barnacles,.... But this article had an unforgettable opening paragraph. "The barnacle," the author explained, "is confronted with an existential decision about where it's going to live. Once it decides, it spends the rest of its life with its head cemented to a rock." End of quote.

For a good many of us, it comes to that....

One must be compassionate in assessing the reasons. Perhaps life just presented them with tougher problems than they could solve. It happens. Perhaps something inflicted a major wound on their confidence or their self-esteem. Perhaps they were pulled down by the hidden resentments and grievances that grow in adult life, sometimes so luxuriantly that, like tangled vines, they immobilize the victim. You've known such people — feeling secretly defeated, maybe somewhat sour and cynical, or perhaps just vaguely dispirited. Or maybe they just ran so hard for so long that somewhere along the line they forgot what it was they were running for.

I'm not talking about people who fail to get to the top in achievement. We can't all get to the top--and that isn't the point of life anyway. I'm talking about people who — no matter how busy they seem to be — have stopped learning or growing. Many of them are just going through the motions. I don't deride that. Life is hard. Just to "keep on keeping on" is sometimes an act of courage. But I do worry about men and women functioning far below the level of their potential.... You know about some of the gifts that you have left undeveloped.

If you are conscious of the danger of going to seed, you can resort to countervailing measures. At any age. You don't need to run down like an unwound clock. And if your clock is unwound, you can wind it up again. You can stay alive in every sense of the word.... You can keep your zest until the day you die.

If I may offer you a simple maxim, "**Be interested**." Everyone wants to be *interesting*--but the vitalizing thing is to **be interested**. Keep your sense of curiosity, your sense of wonder. Discover new things. Care. Risk. Reach out.

Meaning is not something you stumble across, like the answer to a riddle or the prize in a treasure hunt. **Meaning is something you build into your life**. You build it out of your own past, out of your affections and loyalties, out of the experience of humankind as it is passed on to you, out of your own talent and understanding, out of the things you believe in, out of the things and people you love, out of the values for which you are willing to sacrifice something. You build it through your commitments. The ingredients are there. YOU are the only one who can put them together into that unique pattern that will be your life. Let it be a life that has dignity and meaning for you. If it does, then the particular balance of success or failure is of less account." Thank you.

Accent- Jerry Cooley. Olympia

As we begin our conference, I would like to explain what an "Altrusa Accent" is, because you will hear these throughout conference.
The Altrusa Encyclopedia defines an "Altrusa Accent" as a two-minute presentation at a club meeting that covers such items as:

- news on an upcoming International or District event,
- new Altrusa materials, or
- Altrusa historical highlights….

This Accent is a historical highlight from "The Altrusa Tradition" document.

According to *The Altrusa Tradition*, co-authored by Hazel Williams who served as International Secretary in 1922, Altrusa's founders directed each Altrusan to "be good citizens of the world." It was a courageous stand in a time of isolationist thinking.

Speakers on world subjects often were Altrusans who had returned from travels, study, or professional conferences abroad. *The National Altrusan* published many of the key speeches, such as one on a women's conference held at the British Empire Exhibition in 1925, at which Lady Astor, the first woman representative in the House of Commons, gave opening day greetings. Altrusan Elsie Eaves, a civil engineer who attended the conference as a delegate, shared this observation: "*On the other side of the Altrusa world, women are working for the same purpose and ideals and to the same ends as are we in the U.S. They, too, know that they must depend upon organization to gain their goal and they have put their knowledge into practical achievement, the holding of the International Conference of Women in Science, Industry and Commerce at the British Empire Exhibition*."

The spirited national Altrusa Conventions were clearinghouses for program and project ideas. As an early Altrusan reported, "*The air fairly crackled with creativity as enthusiastic lady tycoons discussed what to do to make things better in their cities and the world*." Convention speakers focused on international as well as domestic issues….

National Altrusa persisted in planting seeds of world mindedness with statements such as this one that appeared in the national magazine: "*The world has just become conscious of itself, not as a composite of nations, but as a world. What can we as individuals do in order that internationalism may become part of the texture of our lives? First, we must work on our own thinking*."

So please note that even within the first 10 years of Altrusa's existence as a pioneer service organization for businesswomen back in the 1920's—Altrusans were "**Reimagining**" how they could use service to alleviate people's needs in a creative way in their own communities and also on an international level.

FRIDAY LEADERSHIP PANEL:
"I Didn't Think I Could: Sharing my Leadership Journey"

Inspiration: Bettina Schempf, Past Governor, District Leadership Co-Chair

The Leader
– Anonymous

Patient and steady with all he must bear,
Ready to meet every challenge with care,
Easy in manner, yet solid as steel,
Strong in his faith, refreshingly real,
Isn't afraid to propose what is bold,
Doesn't conform to the usual mold,
Eyes that have foresight, for hindsight won't do,
Never backs down when he sees what is true,
Tells it all straight, and means it all too.
Going forward and knowing he's right,
Even when doubted for why he would fight,
Over and over he makes his case clear
Reaching to touch the ones who won't hear.
Growing in strength, he won't be unnerved,
Ever assuring he'll stand by his word.
So much a leader and worthy of trust,
Here stands a man who will do what he must.

– Anonymous

ABC's of Great Leaders
– Meiji Stewart

Awaken minds.
Bring people together.
Communicate effectively.
Dare to take calculated risks.
Enlighten and empower.
Foster collaboration.
Give you tools to succeed.
Help you do for yourself.
Invite and encourage questions.
Joyfully embrace diversity.

Keep an open mind.
Lead by example.
Motivate with respect.
Never give up on you.
Open doors to new worlds.
Put first things first.
Quest to make learning fun.
Recognize problems early.
Share roles and responsibilities.
Take time to explain things.
Unwrap talents and abilities.
Value everyone’s input.
Welcome mistakes as part of learning.
Exceed expectations.
Yearn to connect, not correct.
Zest to make a difference.

FRIDAY LUNCH- FOUNDATION

Altrusa Grace: Pat McClintock, Secretary

Grace will be printed at end of Program booklet

Inspiration- Ilona Kerby, Past International President, Longview-Kelso, WA

This Inspiration comes from a speech by Arthur Brooks, President of the American Enterprise Institute, on "Why Giving Matters".

We've known for 30 years that people who GIVE get happier as a result….

It turns out that the research data on happiness and charitable giving are beyond dispute. People who give to charity are 43 % more likely than people who don't give to say they're very happy people. People who give blood are twice as likely to say they're very happy people as people who don't give blood. People who volunteer are happier. The list goes on. You simply can't find any kind of service that won't make you happier.

Laboratory experiments using human subjects find that when people are asked to give to other people, it elevates their mood. Furthermore, if you *increase* your level of charitable giving, you can permanently alter your level of what psychologists call "positive effect"—which is to say, being in a good mood. The real question is not *whether* that's true; the question is *why* that's true.

There's a very interesting set of studies that tell us *why* it is that giving will make you into a happy person…The first is that the wiring of our brains is conducive to charitable giving….

- ✓ In the late 1980s there was a famous study of charitable giving that looked at how people reacted with respect to the endorphins that they experienced. Endorphins are neurochemicals that make you feel a sort of euphoria. Psychologists came forth with multiple studies that showed that when people volunteer to help other people, they get what they call "the helper's high", similar to a runner's high, from increased levels of oxytocin and serotonin, which increases your happiness. Volunteering actually gives people a mild sense of euphoria.
- ✓ Studies have shown that charitable giving will objectively lower the stress levels that people feel in their everyday lives.
- ✓ Another Harvard University study followed a group of adults over the age of 50 for five years and found that those who volunteered at least 2 hours a week had a 44% lower risk of dying during the study period than those who did not volunteer.
- ✓ In 2016, researchers at the University of British Columbia and the University of California, Irvine found that financial generosity toward others lowered the blood pressure of the older adults

engaged in the study to almost the same degree that starting a new blood pressure medicine would do.

In closing, Acts of kindness, volunteer service and financial generosity can make a profound impact on **revitalizing** the world and your own well-being.

Accent- Rhonda Hauter, Past Governor, Gig Harbor, WA

Your Altrusa District Twelve Foundation

In 2019 your District Twelve Board agreed to establish the District Twelve Foundation (the Foundation). The 501 (C)-3 status was granted in Dec. 2020.

We agreed its purpose was to help District Clubs, including ASTRA Clubs increase the good they do in their communities by gathering donations, gifts, bequeaths, endowments and the like from a wider audience. We agreed this would help us in *LEADING TO A BETTER COMMUNITY,* only, faster.

Since this date we have worked diligently to carefully structure the organization so that it will help support future needs of clubs.

Our current focus is to launch the Corporate Giving Program (more on that soon). Its purpose is to double donations from company employees who work for Businesses that have a Community Support mantra, via their Corporate Giving Program. So when an employee of one of these companies makes a donation, The Foundation will send them a receipt. Once the receipt is received then they approach their employer regarding matching their donation. That is the purpose of the Corporate Giving Program. It turns my $100.00 donation into a $200.00 donation. These can be set up manually, or, systematically. For example you might want to have $50.00 sent to the Foundation each paycheck. It's a two-fer.

Now, let me focus briefly on an additional benefit that is not immediately visible. Many of you know that it is difficult to create an additional Board in your Club to administer your Club Foundation. Well, good news! In creating the structure of The Foundation we have established it so that your Club can use the District Foundation Board to administer your Foundation. We have created a Fiscal Partnership whereby we sign an agreement with your Club to be accountable for the collection and distribution of funds. When you need funds for a project you would request via a form and The Foundation would take it from there. Your Club's Foundation funds will be held in a restricted account and be accounted for separately.

Thank you for your attention.

FRIDAY MEMBERSHIP/SERVICE SESSION

Inspiration- Tammy Cournoyer, Hermiston, OR

As we are about to celebrate the growth in many of our clubs, we need to remember that retention is even more important than growth. It's easier to keep a current member than find a new one. This Inspiration was taken from a Fostoria, Ohio Altrusa club newsletter prior to that club disbanding, and has an important message for each of us.

Why does a Member Leave?

"Remember me? I'm the one you asked to become a member. I'm the one who paid dues to become a member and stood up in front of all of you and promised to be a good member.

I'm the one who has come to every meeting since that time, but no one paid any attention to me. I tried several times to be friendly to some other members, but they all had their buddies to talk with and sit next to. I sat down along with some unfamiliar faces several times, but they didn't pay attention to me.

I hoped very much that somebody would ask me to take charge of the last fundraising project, but no one asked. I wanted very much to do the job, but no one saw my hand when I volunteered.

I missed my first meeting since becoming a member when my husband was sick. I could not make it, but no one asked me at the next meeting where I was. Gosh, I guess it didn't matter very much to the others whether I was there or not. The next meeting, I decided to stay home and watch a good program on TV. The following meeting, I attended. No one asked where I was the week before.

You might say I am a nice person, love my family, hold a responsible job and serve my community.

You know who else I am? I'm the one who never came back. It amuses me when I think back on how the president and several members were discussing why the Club was losing members. It amuses me that they spent so much time looking for *new* members *when I was there all the time*. All they needed to do was to make me feel wanted, needed and welcome. I'm the one who never came back."

In closing, as we work to grow our clubs with new members, let's remember to always support and engage each current member. Here's a relevant quote from Stephen King:

“We never know which lives we influence, or when, or why. Not until the future eats the present, anyway. We know when it is too late.”

SATURDAY BREAKFAST- ASTRA

Altrusa Grace: Trece Gurrad, District Parliamentarian and ASTRA Advisor, Longview-Kelso, WA
Grace will be printed at end of Program booklet

ASTRA Inspiration: Brielle Bonzani, Pendleton, OR

A 24-year-old boy seeing out from the train's window shouted... "*Dad, look the trees are going behind!"*

Dad smiled and a young couple sitting nearby, looked at the 24-year-old's childish behavior with pity.

Suddenly, he again exclaimed... "*Dad, look the clouds are running with us*!"

The couple could not resist and said to the old man... "*Why don't you take your son to a good doctor?"*

The old man smiled and said... "*I did and we are just coming from the hospital. My son was blind from birth, he just got his eyes today*."

In closing, let this touching story remind us that most of us are guilty of quickly passing judgment. The truth is, *each of us has an untold story*. Each of us has unique experiences that make us who we are, and that influence our behavior.

So never judge a person without first making an effort to know his story. The truth might surprise you!

ASTRA Accent: Malia Narciso, Roseburg, OR

ASTRA is an international community service organization for young women and men ages 11-25 and exists in middle schools, high schools, community colleges, colleges/universities, and as community clubs around the U.S. and abroad. ASTRA is always actively sponsored and supported by a local Altrusa Club.

To increase opportunities for young people to positively impact their communities, Altrusa International appointed a special *Youth Group Committee* in July 1965 to develop a suggested structure and name for the youth groups sponsored by Altrusa Clubs; thus, "ASTRA Clubs" were born.

ASTRA has grown every decade and we now have ASTRA Clubs located in communities all around the United States, Puerto Rico, New Zealand, and India. In District Twelve we have Pendleton and Roseburg sponsored ASTRA clubs, and Longview-Kelso and Campbell River have been working this past year toward chartering new ASTRA clubs.

ASTRA is an acronym.
A-**Ability**
S-**Service**
T-**Training**
R-**Responsibility**
A- **Achievement**

Through ASTRA and with the mentoring of each club's Altrusa advisors, ASTRA members are provided opportunities to share their talents and further develop their leadership skills, communication skills, teambuilding skills, and more while providing service. Altrusa members have the opportunity to shape the future of ASTRA members by making them a part of the Altrusa family now-- and to also show them an opportunity for impactful service and leadership in their future through Altrusa.

SATURDAY LUNCH- LITERACY

Altrusa Grace: Dennis Hebert, District Special Projects Chair, Eugene, OR
Grace will be printed at end of Program booklet

Inspiration: Read by: MaryAlice Ridgway, Pendleton
This Literacy Inspiration is taken in part from a 2016 article, "The Power of Storytelling", in The Health Foundation newsletter.

Storytelling, which offers rich opportunities for literacy development, is a timeless tradition that transcends generations, cultures, and languages. Narratives play a pivotal role in forging connections, inspiring curiosity, fostering empathy, simplifying complex subject matter and promoting cooperation.

Perhaps the first thing that springs to mind when you think of storytelling is a childhood experience of being told a story, or a story that you have told to a child, doing a different voice for every character.

But storytelling does not just take place in a nursery or round a campfire. Stories are part of our daily lives, in the anecdotes we tell our friends, the books we read and the films we watch. Stories are also recognized as an important way of connecting with *any* audience and are increasingly used in workplaces, advertising, and fundraising.

Clare Patey, Director of the Empathy Museum, states "Stories have a transformative power to allow us to see the world in a different way than we do if we just encounter it on our own. Stories are an entry point to understanding a different experience of the world."

This aspect of storytelling – presenting a different perspective of the world – is important when it comes to connecting with each other, whether as children or adults. It gives us an opportunity to learn from another person's experience and it can shape, strengthen or challenge our opinions and values. When a story catches our attention and engages us, we are more likely to absorb the message and meaning within it than if the same message was presented simply in facts and figures.

When someone tells us their own personal story, we catch a glimpse of a view of the world that may be slightly or radically different from our own. When we see the world as they see it, or walk in their shoes, the experience can inspire empathy within them.

Storytelling also has aspects that are effective for all types of learners. *Visual learners* appreciate the mental pictures storytelling evokes. *Auditory learners* focus on the words and the storyteller's voice. *Kinesthetic learners* remember the emotional connections and feelings from the story.

From the simple joy of hearing a new story to the profound wisdom gained from a well-written book, the magic of literacy is unparalleled. The art of storytelling taps into human emotions that bind us all.

Accent: Britt Glass, Campbell River, BC

The power of literacy is transformative.

In 1977, under the leadership of Past International President **Letha H. Brown**, Altrusa International became the *first* volunteer service group to adopt literacy as the focus of its community service activities. In 2021 Past International President **Kathy Folley** introduced the Altrusa International Literacy Challenge, *One Book at a Time*, with a goal of *distributing 1 million books* during her biennium. That challenge has been reissued by current International President **Linda Smith** for this biennium.

The Altrusa International Foundation also incorporated "Action for Literacy" into its philanthropic focus and has supported the efforts of countless local literacy programs through its literacy grant awards for decades.

So how do Altrusans help? Prioritize literacy with our community projects. We typically focus on reading literacy, but don't forget that there are also needs for computer literacy, social media literacy, presentation literacy, quantitative literacy, and writing literacy. Every club in District Twelve has literacy projects. Many also participate in the October *Make a Difference Day* annual day of service with literacy projects.

In closing, literacy is a goal of utmost importance in order to function effectively in society, so let's continue our Altrusa focus on all kinds of literacy needs.

SATURDAY GALA- DINNER AND AWARDS

Altrusa Grace: Shirley Pearsall, Olympia, WA
Grace will be printed at end of Program booklet

Toasts:
Debbie McBee, Presiding
At this time, we have the tradition of toasts offered to the Offices of the leaders of our two countries in District Twelve.
Toasts will be offered by Bonnie Sherow of Altrusa International of Campbell River, BC and MaryAlice Ridgway of Altrusa International of Pendleton, OR
Please prepare to stand and raise your glass to these toasts.

Bonnie Sherow, Campbell River, BC:
"To the Prime Minister"

Mary Alice Ridgway, Pendleton, OR
"To the President"

Inspiration: Read by Susan Swearingen, Pendleton, OR

A Chinese proverb says: "If you always give, you will always have."

Generosity is like a magic key. It opens doors to hearts and homes, creating bonds of love and friendship. Generosity is not just about giving money or things. It's about sharing what you have – your time, your skills, your smile, and your kindness.

Generosity is like a seed. When you plant it in your heart, it grows and blooms. It makes you feel good about yourself. It makes you feel rich, not because you have a lot of things, but because you have a lot of love to give.

Generosity is like a candle. It lights up the world around you. It brings warmth and brightness to the lives of others. And the most amazing thing is, when you light other candles with your candle, your light doesn't get any less. It gets even brighter.

Generosity is like a boomerang. What you give comes back to you. Maybe not right away, maybe not in the way you expect, but it always comes back.

So, be generous. Share what you have. Spread love and kindness. Light up the world. And watch how the magic of generosity transforms your life and the lives of those around you.

Accent: Glenda Schuh, Longview-Kelso, WA

This Altrusa Accent is about "Charitable Giving" and was written by Anne Condran , Altrusa International Foundation Trustee, 2023-2027.

"New fields shall open unto us

A little more than a generation ago a group of women from four cities formed the first Association of Altrusa Clubs. We had expansive visions of what Altrusa might become. But in our wildest dreams we did not picture the Altrusa of today…Nor did we dream the extent of our service to others…

What we have already achieved is magnificent. But Altrusa is not static. It is dynamic. New fields shall open unto us and we will achieve new goals of helpfulness. In the past, in the present and in the future the strength of Altrusa is in the individual member—her vision, her character, her kindliness and her desire for service, and always her power to add to the happiness of those about her. So it is to you, each of you, to build for Altrusa and for your own happiness. Altrusans of the present and the future, I salute you and pledge anew my devotion and understanding."

This article was written by Mamie Luella Bass to celebrate Altrusa's 39th Birthday. It was published in the April 1956 issue of the International Altrusan.

Let's remember, Altrusa is not static. Altrusa is dynamic. The 12th Principle of Altrusa states "Altrusa believes it is not enough to be good; Altrusa must be good for some thing." Literacy and our service projects are our some thing.

Our some thing takes money. It takes money to fund service projects. It takes money to fund disaster relief grants. It takes money to help camps for disabled children. It takes money to provide ASTRA scholarships. The Foundation also provides cash awards to the Altrusa clubs who win District and International Awards for their Mamie L. Bass, Letha H. Brown, Nina Fay Calhoun projects.

So, let's remember the Altrusa International Foundation is the charitable arm of Altrusa International. The Altrusa International Foundation raises the money so new fields can be open to us in the present and in the future.

SUNDAY BREAKFAST- CLOSING

Altrusa Grace: Lee Coumbs, Centralia-Chehalis, WA

Grace will be printed at end of Program booklet

Inspiration: Jennifer Richart, Mid-Columbia, WA

This inspiration is a quote from Dr. Clarissa Pinkola Estes, an American storyteller, psychoanalyst, and best-selling poet and writer.

"Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach.

Any small, calm thing that one soul can do to help another soul, to assist some portion of this poor suffering world, will help immensely.

It is not given to us to know which acts or by whom, will cause the critical mass to tip toward an enduring good. What is needed for dramatic change is an accumulation of acts – adding, adding to, adding more, continuing.

We know that it does not take “everyone on Earth” to bring justice and peace, but only a small, determined group who will not give up during the first, second, or hundredth gale….”

Closing Meditation: Tore Johnson, Gig Harbor, WA

Oprah Winfrey- “The Life You Want”