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Fostering Global Connections: Altrusa MoCo’s Support for Students in Ghana

Altrusa International Montgomery County (MoCo) is proud to highlight our partnership with Gapbuster, Inc’s Ghana Program, a collaboration that perfectly aligns with our mission to create global connections, promote cultural understanding, and make a meaningful impact on students’ lives.

For the past three years, Altrusa MoCo has worked alongside Gapbuster, a nonprofit supporting Ghanaian communities, to provide essential resources to over 8,000 junior and senior high school students. This year, we donated more than 1,600 school supplies items and educational games, easing students’ burdens and fostering a more supportive learning environment.

One of the most rewarding moments of this partnership was hosting nine Ghanaian junior high students and their chaperone, on January 26th, as part of Gapbuster’s International Ambassador Program. During their month-long stay in Maryland and Washington, D.C., they experienced American culture, engaged with local families and students, and participated in a special luncheon hosted by Altrusa MoCo. In addition to cultural exchanges, the students worked alongside our members at the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, decorating baseball caps and writing greeting cards for children being treated at the NIH Children’s Inn. *(More on these stories in this issue.)*

Our contributions included donating suitcases and tote bags to the students as they returned to Ghana—a small but meaningful gesture symbolizing the lasting bond we’ve created.



Club Leadership

President

Patalia Tate

Vice President

Silvia D'Jaen Silverman

Secretary

Cynthia Martin

Treasurer

Vanessa Cox

Director

Cawana Cornelius
Yvonne Wynn

Immediate

Past President

Jeanette Wolfe

Committee Chairs

Service Projects

Co-chairs

Jeanette Wolfe
Sheila Williams

Membership Co-chairs

Silvia D'Jaen Silverman
Patalia Tate

Fundraising Chair

Yvonne Wynn

Communications

Co-chairs

Patalia Tate
Rosa Romero

President's Message



Happy Spring, Members and Fellow Supporters.

As the new season starts to bloom around us, I can't help but feel a renewed sense of optimism and energy. Spring is all about growth and fresh starts—and it's a great reminder of the work we're doing together as a community.

We've accomplished so much already this year, but spring gives us that extra push to keep going and stay focused on our mission. In this issue, you'll learn about some of the exciting service projects we've been working on, all of which are a direct reflection of the incredible impact each of you is making.

But as we look ahead, there is still so much more to be done. Every project we take on, every event we host, every moment we dedicate to serving others adds up to something bigger than ourselves. So, whether you can donate a few hours to volunteer, share your expertise, or help spread the word about our mission, every action counts.

We also have a couple of exciting events coming up: in May, the Altrusa District II Conference in Altoona, PA; and in July, the Altrusa International Convention in Quebec City, Canada. These events are not just wonderful opportunities for us to come together as a community, but also a chance to learn, grow, and be inspired.

As we move through this season of renewal, I encourage each of you to think about how you can engage with our mission in new ways. Whether you're a longtime member or someone new to our community, we all have a role to play in making this organization stronger and more impactful. Thank you for all that you do.

Let's make this spring one to remember!

Best,

Patalia Tate, President,

Altrusa International Montgomery County



April

Shirley Shannon: 7th
Vanessa Cox: 29th

May

Evelyn Hill: 3rd
Vivian Johnson: 7th
Liz Kilpatrick: 26th

Upcoming Dates

March 22, 2025 - Strategic Planning Meeting, 9 A.M - 12 Noon

March 29, 2025 - Medstar Thrift Store, 10 A.M. - 12 Noon

April 3, 2025 - Club Board Meeting @ 6 P.M.

April 5, 2025 - Shepherd's Table Volunteer Day 9 A.M. - 11 A.M.

April 9, 2025 - Membership Committee Meeting @ 6:30 P.M.

April 10, 2025 - General Membership Meeting @ 6:30 P.M.

April 27, 2025 - Stepping Stones Shelter Gather & Grill for Good fundraiser, Smokey Glen Farm in Gaithersburg, MD, 2 P.M. - 6 P.M.

April 29, 2025 - Medstar Thrift Store, 10 A.M. - 12 Noon

May 1-4, 2025 - District Two Conference in Altoona, PA.

May 6, 2025 - Club Board Meeting @ 6 P.M.

May 8, 2025 - General Membership Meeting @ 6:30 P.M.

May 15, 2025 - Literacy Night at Joann Leleck Elementary School @ 6 P.M.

May 31, 2025 - Medstart Thrift Store, 10 A.M. - 12 Noon

Saturday, April 5th

Club Members to Serve at Shepherd's Table

On April 5th, our dedicated members will volunteer at Shepherd's Table, a local organization that serves meals and offers social services, medical support, clothing and other assistance to people in need. They serve 19 meals a week. From 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. our team will serve a warm and nourishing brunch to those experiencing homelessness.

Shepherd's Table is a vital resource in our community, offering not only meals but also a safe space for those facing challenging circumstances. Our volunteers are excited to give back by helping serve delicious meals and providing a bit of comfort to those who need it most.

This volunteer opportunity reflects our ongoing commitment to supporting our neighbors and making a positive impact on the lives of others. We look forward to spending time at Shepherd's Table and contributing to their mission of compassion and care.

More Club News

Supporting Homeless Families: Donation to Stepping Stones Shelter

In February, our club made a meaningful contribution to Stepping Stones Shelter, providing essential items identified as some of their most urgent needs. The donation included 536 bottles of water, two boxes of kitchen trash bags (400 count), three packages of Tide pods (250 count), 24 sponges, and three tubs of disinfectant wipes (225 count).

Stepping Stones Shelter plays a vital role in Montgomery County by offering temporary housing to homeless families, as well as post-shelter support to help families transition into stable housing. Jeanette and Eugene Wolfe personally delivered the donated items, which were gratefully received by Mercedes Brant, the Shelter's Director of Community Engagement. Ms. Brant expressed her heartfelt appreciation, noting that they had just run out of bottled water, making the donation especially timely.

In addition to the donation, a group of us had the opportunity to tour the shelter. Patalia Tate, Nadine Bostic, Vanessa Cox, Yvonne Wynn, and Jeanette Wolfe attended the tour, where Ms. Brant guided us through the facility, sharing valuable insights about the shelter's mission and services. She answered questions and provided a deeper understanding of how Stepping Stones is making a difference in the lives of homeless families in the community.

As we look ahead to the 2025-2026 program year, we are committed to exploring further ways to support Stepping Stones Shelter and help homeless families on their journey to stability. We are inspired by the work being done at the shelter and look forward to continuing our partnership and making a lasting impact.



More Club News

Celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. Through Service

In honor of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, our organization proudly participated in the Montgomery County-wide Day of Service on Sunday, January 19th, at the Bethesda Marriott Conference Center. This inspiring event brought together over 1,500 registrants, who explored various exhibits for information and engaged in hands-on activities throughout the day.

We had the privilege of engaging participants in our **Thoughtful Treasures** project, where volunteers embellished colorful baseball caps, created cheerful greeting cards, and designed placemats for families staying at The Children's Inn at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The Children's Inn provides free lodging and support to families with children facing life-threatening illnesses who are receiving treatment at the NIH Clinical Research Center. Upon check-in, each child and their siblings receive a key to their own mailbox, where they find a special treasure - gifts of encouragement, kindness and joy - awaiting them everyday.

Through the dedication of our volunteers, we completed 72 caps, 21 cards, and 15 placemats. These thoughtful items bring a smile to children and their families during difficult times, offering a moment of happiness in their challenging journey.

In addition to our project tables, we hosted an Exhibitor's Table to share more about our organization and its ongoing community initiatives. We also distributed free books, emphasizing our commitment to literacy and the power of reading.

The Day of Service was not only an opportunity to give back but also a chance to connect with other local organizations working to make the world a better place. It was a lively and meaningful day, and we are grateful for everyone who came together to make it a success.

Thank you for helping us carry forward Dr. King's legacy of service, kindness, and community.



More Club News

Club Members Host Ghanaian Students for a Memorable Cultural Exchange Luncheon

On Sunday, January 26th, members of Altrusa International had the pleasure of hosting a group of junior high students and their chaperone from Ghana for a delightful and enriching luncheon at the home of club member Carol Ubosi. The event was conducted as part of Gapbuster Ghana's International Ambassador Program. The gathering provided a unique opportunity for cultural exchange, as Altrusa members shared a fun and meaningful afternoon with their Ghanaian guests.

Carol Ubosi, alongside fellow club member Vivian Johnson, warmly welcomed the students, sharing their personal story of visiting Ghana more than 35 years ago. During their trip, Carol and Vivian explored the vibrant cities of Accra and Kumasi, gaining invaluable insights into the rich history and culture of the country. In turn, the Ghanaian students eagerly shared their own experiences of life in Ghana, providing a fascinating window into their daily lives.

One of the highlights of the day was the chance to play 'Oware,' a strategic board game that originated in West Africa. Both the students and Altrusa members enjoyed the friendly competition, learning more about each other through this traditional game.

The afternoon also featured heartfelt stories from the students experiencing America for the first time. They shared their excitement about their very first plane ride, their experiences attending schools in the Maryland area, and the wonder of seeing snow for the first time.

The luncheon featured a delightful mix of cuisine, including a traditional Ghanaian dish, jollof rice, alongside classic American fare. It was a joyful celebration of cultures, bridging gaps and opening hearts in the spirit of friendship. Other Altrusa members in attendance included: Yvette Butler, Diana Mustafa, Shirley Shannon, Sheila Williams, and Jeanette Wolfe.



More Club News

Club Members Partner with Days for Girls for Latin America

On Sunday, January 26, 2025, our club united with the Days for Girls (DFG) Rockville, MD Chapter to make a meaningful impact. We donated 243 pairs of women's underwear and 240 washcloths for menstrual health kits destined for countries in Latin America. Additional donations came from Sheila Williams and Jeanette Wolfe, further supporting this important cause.

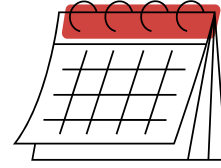
Club members Nadine Bostic, Harriette Chiavacci, Silvia Silverman, Patalia Tate, and Yvonne Wynn, along with other DFG volunteers, spent the afternoon folding washcloths, underwear, and preparing materials for sewing. It was a rewarding day of service and camaraderie.

On February 9th, volunteers Patalia Tate, Jeanette Wolfe, Harriette Chiavacci, and Carla Ramdat gathered for another non-sewing day to continue folding items. More volunteers joined on March 9th to help prepare the kits.

The Days for Girls organization is now finalizing the kits for shipment and distribution to Latin America later this year.



Save the Dates



ALTRUSA DISTRICT TWO - 69TH ANNUAL DISTRICT CONFERENCE



MAY 1 - 4, 2025
ALTOONA GRAND HOTEL
ALTOONA, PENNSYLVANIA



ALTRUSA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

JULY 23 - 26, 2025
QUEBEC CITY, CANADA



Contact Us!

We're always looking
for new members!



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