



## Spotlighting Community Partners: Altrusa International of Chula Vista

For nearly 70 years, a dedicated group of women and men have enriched the lives of thousands of South Bay community members with donations, community service, and goodwill. The Altrusa International Club of Chula Vista was formed in 1956 when a group of like-minded businesswomen came together to share their passion for uplifting the community. Today, the group's 36 members include new professionals, businesswomen, government employees, educators, and retirees. All are still dedicated to the joy of giving.



The small, yet mighty, group spends the year raising funds to support literacy, educational programs, and community services in the South Bay. The group also provides opportunities for children, at-risk youth, and seniors to read and grow in a healthy environment.

Literacy has been a foundational priority for club members, dating back to the 1980's when a founding member, Ray-Etta Morrell, and her fellow Altrusa sisters created the Adult Literacy program for the library. Yellow signs stating "Learn to Read for Free" were posted all over the Chula Vista. The

program was based out of a small house near the Civic Center Public Library, and staffed by a City Literacy Coordinator and volunteers, including many Altrusans. The program moved to a Literacy Center space at the South Chula Vista branch after it opened in 1995. The Altrusa Club gave \$1,000 annually for several years to the Adult Literacy program for the purchase of materials and books.

The literacy theme and library partnership continued into the 2000s when Altrusa supported a new Kindergarten Boot Camp (KBC) in 2013 where the Literacy Center had been. Asked by then-Library Director Betty Waznis, an Altrusan, the Chula Vista Altrusa Club funded supplies. The

Club provided \$9,000 in funds from various resources to get KBC up and running. Club members volunteered at KBC, which expanded to the Civic Center branch, and was active for five years.



Last month, the Chula Vista City Council recognized club members, and the club's cumulative \$300,000 in community donations since its formation. The range of community service is only limited by the imagination of members of Altrusa International of Chula Vista, and the club is always seeking new members. For more information on the Chula Vista Altrusa Club, visit the [club's website](#).