

# ALTRUSA DISTRICT NINE

## MEMBERSHIP 2.0 SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

The charge of the Membership 2.0 committee was to drill down on the four membership goals of the District Nine Strategic Plan:

- Actively recruit, retain and embrace a diverse membership.
- Focus on untapped markets of potential members, including ASTRA parents and representatives from organizations we serve.
- Educate members on the basic tenets and policies/procedures of Altrusa so they are more engaged.
- Provide targeted support for under-charter clubs in identified areas of weakness.

The committee met weekly for twelve weeks and worked hard exploring approaches for Altrusa clubs in District Nine to achieve these membership goals. The result of our efforts is a system of three growth models:

**DISCOVERY** Model designed to help clubs seek new prospective members in new places, not just add more members

**POWER** Model designed to fast-track clubs needing to rebound from a membership setback with an intense effort to make an immediate comeback

**LEARNING** Model usable by all clubs as a tool for increasing member buy-in through understanding Altrusa structure and processes

My sincere thanks to each of these Altrusans for their many hours of hard work:

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Jack Arthur, Downtown Dallas  
Michelle DiGaetano, Temple  
Stacy Earles, Greenville  
Shawna Elliott, Pampa  
Tina Hampton, Southeast Tarrant County Early Risers  
Sharon Tramonte, San Antonio

Although we worked hard and fleshed out many good ideas, there are just eight of us. We are sure there are many more wonderful ideas from Altrusans throughout our district. Please share your successes with the District Nine Membership Committee and ask for help when you need it.

Respectfully submitted:

*Debbie Mabry*

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# DISCOVERY Model

The **DISCOVERY** model is designed to help clubs seek out new prospective members from new places, not just working to get more members. This model aims to strengthen Altrusa through a diversified membership built with new members found in previously undiscovered environments through a two-step process.

## NEW MEMBERS/NEW MARKETS

### 1. What does diversity mean for your club?

Diversity has many elements. Membership 2.0 identified the following characteristics in which District Nine, as a whole, is not evenly represented: age, gender, race/ethnicity/culture, socio-economic, employment/skills, faith, geographic location and marital status. To understand in what respects your club's membership may be under-represented, identify those ways in which it may currently be disproportionately represented.

### 2. Where should your club look for new members?

Once your club discovers the areas in which it would like to diversify its membership, consider the places, environments and circumstances where prospective members with those characteristics may be found. Plan a strategy for engaging prospective new members in contexts your club has not previously explored. Below are suggestions from Membership 2.0.

## Where to find potential new members

### Digital environment

- Entrepreneur networks, e.g., Roam Innovative Workplace
- Online networking groups
- Social media platforms

### Professional environment

- Corporations who sponsor service projects with their employees as volunteers
- Small businesses
- Job placement services
- Chamber of Commerce, local Economic Development Corp.
- Altrusans' places of employment and those of their family members

### Academic environment

- High schools (including student volunteer and parent volunteer organizations)
- Colleges/Universities/Graduate programs
- Trade/Vocational schools,
- Career counseling offices
- Job fairs

### Social environment

- Community organizations and events: newcomer groups, leadership development programs, service groups, fairs, festivals
- Families: neighborhood groups, book clubs, athletic leagues, Altrusans' family members
- Non-profit organizations: Altrusa beneficiaries, recently formed and in need of assistance, established with broad community support
- Faith-based groups: places of worship, study groups, community outreach ministries
- Military support groups: auxiliaries for families of active duty military, veterans groups

# MAKING CONTACT

## How to engage potential new members

### General

- Invite prospective new members in groups so they will have other potential new members around them and may feel more comfortable at club meetings.
- Identify other organizations in your area and support them; offer to make a presentation or honor their volunteers. Educate them about Altrusa so they can become a referral source.
- Invite other organizations to help with Altrusa service projects and help these other groups with their projects.
- Schedule a “membership service project” designed for club members and guests to do together. Invite potential members to help them see first-hand what you do and find out more about Altrusa.

### Professionals

- Customize a marketing tool to market (educate) and sell (recruit) Altrusa to this group.
- Attend business networking events, career events, job fairs, check out websites with young professionals (Eventbrite.com, meetup.com) and networking groups where you can market Altrusa. Look for community calendars online, in newspapers and other publications (e.g., free books available at many community outlets) to see what new business events are coming up.
- Join the Chamber of Commerce or speak with Economic Development Corp. that brings new development to town. Host an after-hours mixer to introduce them to Altrusa. Send information on how Altrusa helps the community and hold a “meet and greet” to get to know new companies and have them know Altrusa. Invite those volunteers to a club meeting in groups (e.g., several Chamber members together).
- Reach out to corporations whose employees participate in corporate sponsored service projects. Explore opportunities to collaborate on existing or new service project.
- Write to company CEO or HR exec thanking them for their community service. Invite them to nominate employees for membership in Altrusa.

### Student/Parent Volunteers

- **College students:** Students have vast experience in providing service in their schools and community, including our own ASTRA clubs, and may want to continue that service after graduation.
  - Inform students about the service Altrusa provides and invite them to extend what they have done in school to Altrusa.
  - Collect names of students in service organizations and send invitations to a meeting.
  - Ask campus professionals who is NOT involved in campus activities. Look for students who are not connected, less involved and help them become more involved.
  - Volunteer to speak to college service organizations. Provide administrative office with info. about Altrusa.
  - Most colleges have centers for local engagements; ORG-sync and campus lab apps are used to track students’ volunteer hours; volunteer fairs on campus; contact Panhellenic/Greek clubs.
  - Tap into former ASTRA members.

- **Vocational/Trade School students:** Research what vocational or trade schools are available in your club area.
  - Contact career counseling office and student organizations for opportunities to engage with Altrusa or learn about ASTRA.
  - Find out what staff may be able to help you.
  - Identify scheduled events (e.g., job fairs). Make a plan of action for Altrusa to support that event.
- **High School Parents:** High school student volunteers have parents and caregivers who also have a wide experience of supporting their students and who may be looking for a way to continue their volunteerism after their students leave high school.
  - Host a “Celebration of Service” at the end of the year for identified graduating senior service leaders from all service clubs or others who provide service. Invite parents and teachers to help recognize the students for their years of service. Prepare certificates or give pins, for recognition of their service.
  - Approach administration about opportunities for Altrusa to partner with the school on a service project including students and parents.
  - Research school service activities on and off campus and identify graduating service leaders. Talk to career counselors to find out where students are helping out and reach out to those groups. Include non-sport activities (debate team, choir... anything that requires parental activity.)
  - Promote Altrusa on campus for future Altrusans or ASTRA. Have Altrusa marketing tool available for students, parents and teachers.
  - Attend meetings of parent organizations (PTA, boosters) and on-campus events for parents (meet-the-teacher); collect names and invite their members to Altrusa meetings. Host a booth/table at school events to talk about Altrusa service.

### Community Groups

- **Military**
  - Military bases may have “Howdy” events designed to introduce military spouses to community. Set up booth and tailor presentation for the spouses of soldiers completing military service to introduce them to Altrusa as a way to continue the service to their communities that they might have provided on their base.
  - Contact VFW or auxiliary to see if Altrusa can partner with them.
- **Community leadership programs (e.g., Leadership Dallas)**
  - If there is a leadership program in the club area, obtain list of new class and invite to a club meeting as a group, or invite to participate in a service project.
  - Ask if Altrusa can be part of the program’s curriculum.
  - If there is no leadership program, have Altrusa start one. Send a club member of the club through that class.
- **Newcomers to the community:** Find out if your community has a newcomer’s group. Consider alliances between your Altrusa club and other local groups so they understand what we do and can market Altrusa on our behalf. See what information for newcomers is available online and what networking events are already available to your club.
  - Look online for networking events, coworking spaces, community classes, gyms.
  - Engage local realtors, insurance agencies, rental agencies, city and state volunteers, etc. as resources for information on newcomers. Provide local realtors “welcome bags” for newcomers that includes Altrusa marketing tool.

- **Nonprofit volunteers:** Our communities are full of volunteers... in hospitals, senior groups/facilities, Boys/Girls Clubs, YMCA/YWCA, etc. Altrusa may appeal to these service-minded individuals in addition to their current activities or as an opportunity for leadership development.
  - Identify other service clubs in the community and research their focus and objectives. Partner with them on a service project to help other service clubs get to know Altrusa as a partner in service.
  - Research community organizations, such as Junior League, where members become inactive at a certain age. Work with those organizations to invite prospective members to an Altrusa service project.
  - Establish a sister club.
  - Hold an Altrusa reunion with former members that includes a service project.
- **Communities where Altrusa is currently unserved or underserved:** Identify a community or part of town that is not currently supported by Altrusa service. What are the community needs and how can Altrusa address them? Is there a school that Altrusa can support? What existing club service projects could be expanded into this area? Who are the civic or municipal leaders? All of these new contacts are prospective new Altrusa members.
  - Research what community service is already available, what other organizations and businesses operate there.
  - Invite civic leaders to speak at Altrusa meetings and explore opportunities for Altrusa to get involved.
  - Attend other community events or job fairs to see what is being done and what is needed.
  - Identify obstacles that have kept Altrusa from being involved there previously and how they could be overcome.
  - If area is a good potential for a new Altrusa club, contact District Nine for assistance.

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR THEM?

### Offer prospective members a benefit statement

- Altrusa offers a **networking opportunity** as well as fellowship and friendship. It provides an avenue to make a positive difference in the community while also making a difference in members' lives through personal growth, leadership opportunities, support and mentoring.
- Altrusa offers an opportunity to be a **trailblazer for change** in our communities as well as in parts of Texas where service organizations are either nonexistent or where Altrusa could augment the efforts that are currently being provided. We offer an opportunity for greater understanding, tolerance and friendships within our cities, cultures, ethnicities and world.
- Altrusa **helps families and friends.** What better place to find a role model not only for our own children, but the children in our communities? We support our communities by addressing the "people-need" and what all of us can do to give back to our communities. We work to effect change where no one else is doing it. We look to be good for some *thing*.
- Altrusa provides **meaningful and fulfilling work** and through this work, opportunities for **leadership development.** Members can acquire and develop skills to become tomorrow's leaders through providing experiences in club leadership at many levels. The skills developed in volunteerism boost the personal and professional growth of our members and continually improve the quality of service we give our communities.

## POWER Model

The **POWER** model is designed to fast-track clubs needing to rebound from a membership setback through an intense effort toward an immediate comeback. Organizations often suffer setbacks in various ways from various causes. By honestly assessing the source(s) of a setback in membership, and designing a strategy for moving forward in a new direction, your club can rebound from the setback with strong, sustainable growth.

### UNDERSTANDING THE SETBACK

Clubs need to **HONESTLY** identify possible causes for a loss of members. This could be done with the assistance of a District leader. Membership 2.0 identified the following possible reasons:

- Personnel or people issues: Someone wanting to be the boss who is not qualified; backstabbing; someone being promoted who did not deserve it; conflict/internal division
- Not enough successes to keep members excited and going strong
- Poor leadership: Not handling business correctly; not following the rules
- Lack of engagement/involvement/ investment: Joining Altrusa for the wrong reasons
- Financial requirements too stressful on a budget
- Life! Too busy at home, with family responsibilities, at work
- Membership aging, death, disability, loss of mobility
- No connection with social media-based members (especially the 25- to 35-year-olds)
- Reliance on one or just a few members who then move on
- Burn-out in leadership

### MAKING A COMEBACK

Once the causes for the setback are identified, concentrate on making a comeback with a strategy that avoids those causes. Membership 2.0 suggests the following:

#### **Concentrate on community service rather than meetings**

- Schedule mini-service projects for each meeting to keep service in the forefront.
- Explore unconventional meetings: virtual meetings, conference calls, or combine meetings with a social event or service event.
- Avoid overloading members: Look at things that must be done, and what can be shelved until there are more members to take on some of the work. Prioritize and keep the mission in mind.
- Form a small committee to develop a project, then engage and involve other members.

#### **Get to know the members as friends and avoid potential conflict**

- Hold member mixers or socials where the purpose is very clearly explained as a way to talk about possible issues in the club. Celebrate differences!
- Meet for coffee or use a messaging app to share personal information. Get creative about getting to know members, such as a “get to know you” forum.
- Hands-on service projects: Members need time together, face to face; working side-by-side on project or socially (non-business environment).
- Plan fun events for inviting guests such as coffee, wine tasting, painting with a twist, game night, or cooking together as a team and then share with the community.

### **Grow the leadership to allow ALL members to experience success**

- Make success happen for the leaders so they feel good about what they are doing.
- Set the precedent that the chair of a project trains a co-chair and hands it off the next year so everyone can continue to grow the project and have success. No one person “owns” a project.
- Mentor members: Utilize members on all levels to help support the club; point out the leaders’ successes and build them up; set up a club leadership committee that works with current board members to work on team building exercises.
- Develop a member’s strength in steps: Members first lead a project, then a committee, then perhaps a board position.
- Make specific job placements: Identify specific jobs for each new member and jobs for one-year members, so you grow your leadership from the new members.

### **Focus on the brand drivers of clarity, flexibility, inclusiveness**

- Clearly explain what Altrusa is and what the club does. Hold a “membership 101” type of orientation that includes the brand drivers.
- Actively look for ways to be flexible within the club so every member can participate in some way, even those who may not be able to make meetings regularly.
- Include people in club activities who are not already Altrusans; think outside the box.
- Grow brand recognition: Focus on brand recognition on all communications. Include the mission statement on everything internal and on outgoing publicity.
- Write a short, clear statement describing your club. Analyze the flexibility, clarity and inclusiveness of the club and decide where there may be gaps. Analyze who is missing from the club and where to find them.

### **More activities within the community**

- Complete a “mini community analysis” each year of what is being done and what is lacking.
- Look for ways to be visible within the community. Wear Altrusa gear, such as t-shirts and pin. Be out there, be more involved; help other organizations.
- Plan fundraisers that can involve the community.
- Identify things that can be used more than once: Club newsletter article that can be snipped and sent out to others in the community on social media.

### **Provide encouragement (District)**

- Past Governors and board members mentor club presidents when needed.
- Club Presidents Council: Hold a conference call periodically to discuss one issue of importance.
- Adopt a club or a sister club to celebrate each and every new member that a club brings in.
- Develop incentives for under-charter-strength clubs to bring in members.

### **Sales pitches (describe why Altrusa is important)**

- Develop a two-step sales pitch: The first part is short and sweet, just THREE WORDS “We do Service,” followed by what a description of what the club does specific to your community.
- Customize quick and easy phrases or “sales pitches” about your club. What makes your club unique? Why should a potential member look into your club?

### **Identify why your club began to shrink in the first place**

- District leadership can assist clubs by meeting with them regularly by conference call (presidents or membership chair) to help them correct their course and get back on track.
- Contact people who leave to find out why they aren’t coming back; exit interviews.



### **Focused recruitment**

- Analyze your club's current approaches to recruiting, identifying obstacles and what isn't working. Try a fresh approach to recruiting; see what others in the area are doing that is working for them. Make changes; try something different.
- Identify a target market and write a recruiting profile for your club. Who would you like to join? Hold club planning meetings. Review the growth strategy to generate more ideas specific to your club. Combine all ideas into a single growth plan for the club.
- Use your club's District mentor as a resource who can provide a "menu" of ideas to go over with your club and share possibilities. The District mentor may also be able to provide "bodies" for projects or special events to help until the club is again strong.
- Decide what tools and technical support you need to achieve your growth plan.

# LEARNING Model

The LEARNING Model can be used by all clubs as a tool for increasing member buy-in through understanding Altrusa. The faster new members get up to speed on Altrusa structure and processes, the sooner they get truly plugged in and hooked on Altrusa. The Learning Model captures Altrusa's rich history of traditions and provides a variety of updated delivery options. Below are Membership 2.0 suggestions for key data points and approaches to conveying them.

## CRITICAL CONTENT

**Inclusivity:** We aid and support each other. This is our standard for treating one other and our guests. We welcome everyone to Altrusa, and everyone should be treated with dignity and respect. Altrusans don't let other Altrusans fail. We have each other's back and can count on one another.

**Understand financial requirements:** Members should know what it means for a club to be financially sound, where dues are used and how our project and operational budgets work.

**Multi-layered involvement:** Altrusans are appreciated for what they can contribute, whether it is an hour, several hours or a day. Altrusa is a club for all seasons of life... some years members may be more or less active than others. Members may or may not grow into a club leadership roll.

**Fellowship:** The "what's in it for me" for Altrusans. Members' reward for serving with other Altrusans is fellowship with one another and with others in the community. This bonding is what makes lifelong Altrusans.

**Understand club bylaws and policies:** Bylaws are the "rules" that guide each Altrusa club, worldwide; policies guide our clubs locally. Members should know where to find the bylaws and understand their club policies.

**Community service and community development:** This is Altrusa's reason for being. We provide service which helps develop our communities.

**Altrusa Principles:** Our principles have guided Altrusans and Altrusa clubs to be the best they can be for nearly a century. Many of the principles of Altrusa should be in the forefront of our minds as they describe what our clubs and members strive for.

- Altrusa is a builder.
- It is not enough to be good, but we should be good for some thing.
- You don't join Altrusa, you become an Altrusan.
- Altrusa is practical idealism.

**Connectivity:** We connect to each other and to clubs worldwide through a focus of service.

**Strategic Planning:** Planning lays the groundwork for where a club will go in the future. Planning should be a club-wide effort so everyone feels invested in the club's direction.

**Officers and Directors:** Members need to know their club's leaders, who the club officers are and their respective duties.

**Protocol:** Altrusa has protocol at all levels - club, District and International. Members should be aware of these protocols in order to feel comfortable at District and International events, and to help their guests feel comfortable at club meetings.

**Teamwork:** Working together makes our efforts stronger and brings our members closer. Each of us brings unique abilities to Altrusa, and every member's abilities are valuable and needed. Sharing these abilities through teamwork makes the job easier and the results last.

## DELIVERY OPTIONS

**New member orientation:** Develop an orientation booklet to augment what is available in the new member kit with the specific fundamentals and policies explained in detail.

**Monthly Accents:** District Nine can develop presentations of one fundamental per month designed to be used by the club as an accent. These can also be part of the orientation booklet.

**District webinar training via online platform:** Develop webinars presented by District Altrusa leaders. Webinar presenter(s) should write specific training sessions that can be included on the District website after online training, e.g.:

- Webinar for conference attendees on “What to expect and why we do what we do”
- “Leadership forum” webinar (and/or conference) to discuss dealing with difficult people to help clubs with leadership issues

**Videos presentations:** District Nine can develop video presentations on timely topics needed to help educate club members. These should be made available on the District website “on demand” through YouTube so they can be shown as an accent or at orientation. NOTE: The nature of some content makes it better suited for webinar, taped interview, written or read statements for video, or other media.

**Monthly club in-service:** “30-minute in-service” that a club membership committee can put on before a meeting for those who wish to come early to participate.

**Game:** Develop fun activities for the club to do to educate members in a fun, light way. Examples might be information formatted in a style of Jeopardy or other game show.

**New member inclusion:** Invite new members to be on the local foundation board to better understand what the foundation does. The foundation board requires minimal involvement as it only meets a couple time a month, but provides lots of information and helps new members feel involved.

**Altrusa Key:** Augment the meeting accents by adding an Altrusa Key. The “Key is about me” includes a member giving a brief (30-second) introduction before the accent.

**Banner/Sign:** Produce a banner or sign to be displayed at club meetings that lists basic tenets or principles of Altrusa.

**Social media:** Monthly Facebook exercise where one principle is posted each month and members can respond on what that principle means to them. This could be done at the club or District level.

**Show-and-tell at District Conference:** Invite each club to make a poster to bring to conference specifically on one topic, such as how they recruited members, how the club builds its leadership, what fellowship means to them, how they became financially sound, how they helped their members become community leaders. Clubs could create a “word cloud” montage about one tenet on a t-shirt and wear to conference on one day.

**Messaging app:** Use a messaging app to send out information about Altrusa fundamentals. This would be useful for reminders and for engaging younger members.

**“Traveling Trainers”:** Develop an Altrusa Speakers Bureau with a list of topics suitable for specific education at club meetings and list leaders around the District (not just board members) with the ability to travel to clubs for the purpose of speaking on that topic.

**Getting to know you:** Develop a program similar to “Speed Membership” (modeled after speed dating) for Altrusans getting to know each other or Altrusa leaders sharing one topic each with newer members.