



# Membership Engagement

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District Nine Membership Engagement Committee

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## Poll Questions!



What is your preferred highest level of involvement with your club?

- ☐ Volunteering for service projects
- ☐ Attending club events (meetings / socials)
- ☐ Leading a committee
- ☐ Serving on the Board of Directors or Foundation Board
- ☐ Supporting behind the scenes, a worker bee

It's the old saying, "You get out of Altrusa what you put into Altrusa".

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# **A New Year A New You in Altrusa**

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As we move into 2026, we welcome new beginnings, new energy, and new opportunities to make a difference.

Each of us brings something unique—when you grow, Altrusa grows. Your passion strengthens our projects, and your heart for service impacts our community.

Together, we make Altrusa stronger, brighter, and more impactful.

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Altrusa is more than a service club—it's where friendships deepen, confidence builds, and talents become tools for change.

- Our small acts create ripples far beyond what we see.
- As we recruit new members, the question becomes:  
How do we help them feel connected, valued, and excited to grow within Altrusa, just as we have?
- Every new member needs to feel seen, supported, and excited about their Altrusa journey.
- Today is about more than just joining Altrusa; it's about becoming—growing into the heart, purpose, and service of an Altrusan.

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## Poll Questions!



When does member engagement or member retention begin?

- ☐ As soon as dues are paid.
- ☐ At new member orientation before initiation or shortly after.
- ☐ When you think a member is not engaged in the club.
- ☐ When you stop seeing a member at meetings and events.

What motivates you most to stay involved in Altrusa?

- ☐ The service projects
- ☐ Friendships and connection
- ☐ Leadership opportunities
- ☐ Professional growth
- ☐ Other (share in Chat)

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## New Member Orientation and Mentor Assignment

1. **Sponsor group sessions** with a thoughtfully planned agenda that allows time for individual participation and questions.
2. **Assign a Mentor** in addition to Sponsors.
  - Good resources for your club are the **Past Presidents**. They are knowledgeable, seasoned Altrusans that can help guide the new member through the first year.
  - Develop a **checklist** for the Mentors to create opportunities for interactions.

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## New Member Orientation

3. Use a **checklist** to ensure new members have appropriate information about Altrusa, past and present.
4. Keep your **materials updated** to reflect your club's current activities.
5. Depending on time constraints, schedule a zoom meeting orientation, or time before a meeting. If need be, hold several smaller orientation sessions to cover specific areas. Have the new member pick their committees to work on and notify the committee chairs to involve them quickly.

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## New Member Orientation

6. Hold a **special initiation ceremony** to welcome the new member and if possible, hold the orientation program before the initiation.
7. Organize members of the Club BOD to **take a new member to lunch** or meet for happy hour, etc. When the new member is familiar with more club members, the meetings are less intimidating to attend.
8. Have **greeters at your meeting** doors to welcome members and guests. No one likes to feel like the stranger in the room.
9. Remember, people won't forget how you made them feel. Make it positive.

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## Poll Questions!



How welcoming is your club to new members?

- ☐ Extremely welcoming
- ☐ Somewhat welcoming
- ☐ Needs Improvement
- ☐ Not welcoming

How effective is your club's new member orientation / mentorship?

- ☐ Very effective
- ☐ Somewhat effective
- ☐ Not effective
- ☐ We don't have one

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## Sophomore Siblings

Establish a “Sophomore Siblings” Committee for new members from the previous club year.

- Give them a **budget** to complete a project under the mentoring of the Immediate Past President of the club. **Make a Difference Day**, the fourth Saturday in October, gives them time to meet and organize.
- As new members, the **Mentor** is a great resource to answer questions and encourage participation.
- Sophomore Siblings is a **safe space** for new members to explore Altrusa and build bonds with each other.
- You can designate a Sophomore Sibling by using a **different color ribbon** (different from seasoned members) for new members pins and name tags. This is great for larger clubs to make it easy to identify the new members and make them welcome.

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## New Member Orientation Check List

Prepared as a notebook or digital file to download includes:

- ☐ A club membership certificate
  - ☐ A copy of your latest club newsletter
  - ☐ A copy of your club brochure or rack card
  - ☐ A few of your club business cards
  - ☐ A copy of your club yearbook that includes club policies and membership expectations.
  - ☐ Welcome Letter from the International President, The Chair of the International Foundation, and the District Nine Governor
  - ☐ An Altrusa Foundation Brochure, An International Altrusa Brochure,
  - ☐ The Altrusa Tradition
  - ☐ An Astra Brochure
- All are available on the International and District websites!!

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## Poll Questions!



What is the biggest barrier for new member Retention/Engagement?

- ☐ Lack of feeling connected to the group
- ☐ Unclear roles or expectations
- ☐ Too many commitments
- ☐ Not enough meaningful involvement, not participating in projects or meetings
- ☐ Other (type in Chat)

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## The First Year Follow-up

- 1. Develop a questionnaire** for new members to assess their first year Altrusa experience. Include questions to evaluate your orientation program, mentoring program and sophomore sister committee. Are these programs meeting your goals for new members?
- 2.** You want to learn what aspects of your **orientation plan** are effective and what needs improving. Involve the new members in the review results too.
- 3. Select a new member** to present their first-year experience in the next years orientation sessions.

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## The First Year Follow-up

**4. Record each new members committee activities and participation.** This can provide insight into membership gains and losses. **Create an exit survey.**

**5.** After the evaluation, apply the insights to your all member reorientation too.

What's the biggest reason members stop participating in the club?

Is it time constraints, feeling disconnected, lack of inspiration, or not enough interesting projects. How are you going to know what areas your club needs to focus on to improve member engagement? You have to ask. You have to be honest and realistic. What could we have done better? You don't know until you ask so create your club's exit survey for nonrenewing members.

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## Poll Questions!

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**What's the biggest reason members stop participating in the club?**

- ☐ Time constraints / Asked to do too much
- ☐ Not feeling heard / seen
- ☐ Not feeling included / connected
- ☐ Not feeling inspired by fellow Altrusans / Club activities
- ☐ Not what member expected
- ☐ Not enough interesting projects
- ☐ Personality dispute

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## Seek Feedback!

How are you going to know what areas your club needs to focus on to improve member engagement?

You have to ask. You have to be honest and realistic.

What could we have done better? You don't know until you ask so create your club's **exit survey** for nonrenewing members.

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## Poll Questions!

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Do you feel a sense of belonging in your club?

- ☐ Yes, absolutely
- ☐ Most of the time
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Not Really

How engaged do you feel in your Altrusa Club right now?

- ☐ Very Engaged
- ☐ Somewhat engaged
- ☐ Not very engaged
- ☐ Not engaged at all

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## Altrusa Club Member Re-orientation Program

**Reconnect, Renew, and Rediscover** all that Altrusa offers.

Opportunity to **Challenge and Encourage** both new and seasoned members to grow personally and make an even greater impact through their service in Altrusa.

Provide an icebreaker at the beginning of the program..

- “Why I became an Altrusan?”: Have each member share a 10 second reason they became an Altrusan and why they remain in the club.
- “My One Word”: Have each member choose one word that reflects what they want from their Altrusa experience this year. Share their one “My Altrusa Word for the Year” and publish the list in your newsletter.

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## Altrusa Club Member Re-orientation Program

2. Discuss in a **“New You”** segment, how Altrusa helps members develop personally, their confidence, leadership, networking, friendship, and satisfaction in volunteering. Have members share their “How I’ve Grown Story” in Altrusa with a short testimonial. Use a timer to keep the meeting flowing.

3. **Brainstorm service ideas.** Divide into small groups and discuss what new service projects would align with Altrusa’s mission or what inspires you in your community. Pair members talents with projects.

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## Altrusa Club Member Re-orientation Program

### 4. Membership **Engagement Challenge**.

- Ask each member to bring a guest to a meeting, a project or the re-orientation.
- Challenge seasoned members to mentor a new member.
- Have each Altrusan write a personal goal for the year on a note card and share the goals with your group.

5. **Arrange for a speaker** that will inspire your members. Someone to help them grow or present a new community project and outline opportunities for Altrusans to participate and build excitement. If the program is interactive, members will enjoy it more and be more responsive.

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## Altrusa Club Member Re-orientation Program

6. Provide 15-minute **mini sessions** with club topics for members to rotate in and out of different sessions.

- How to chair a committee?
- What do the Administration Committees do, and how do I use my talents?
- What do the Foundation Committees do, and where do I volunteer my time?
- How do I use Social Media to promote my club?
- What is the function of Altrusa International, the International Foundation, and District Nine?
- What are the requirements and obligations to serving on the Club BOD or the Club Foundation?

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## Altrusa Club Member Re-orientation Program

- The choice of topics for re-orientation are endless.
- Evaluate what committees are working, what's not working, this is the time to retrain and educate your members on everything Altrusa.
- Set aside a Saturday morning for 3 or 4 hours. Arrange a light lunch or make a reservation for members to attend a self pay lunch at a local restaurant after the re-orientation.
- Create a theme that your members will enjoy.
- Organize it, advertise it and do what works for your club.
- Have some fun!

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## Poll Questions!

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How often do you participate in club activities outside regular meetings?

- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never
- ☐ When there is a blue moon

Which types of activities do you find most engaging?

- ☐ Hands-on service
- ☐ Fundraising events
- ☐ Social activities
- ☐ Leadership Development
- ☐ Community outreach or advocacy

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## Events / Activities to Encourage Member Retention and Engagement

1. An annual Re-orientation for your members will encourage engagement.
2. Start a book club for members and guests. Sometimes guests attending social functions get to know us and become Altrusans.
3. Celebrate your members. What special interests do your members have?
4. Host a new member party for the UN International Friendship Day.
5. Pick a holiday, the Richardson club has celebrated Bastille Day.

*We had a member who took her family to France, and she had a 3 ft replica of the Eiffel Tower. We decorated a local Mexican Food restaurant like a French bistro with the tower in the middle of everything. We gave the new members silly awards and everyone wore a beret. It's a great way to get to know your new members in a relaxed setting.*

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## Events / Activities to Encourage Member Retention and Engagement

- Mardi Gras parties with mask and costume contests
- Book Swap Parties
- Wine tastings
- Movie outings
- Theatre visits
- Museum visits
- Holiday parties
- New Year parties
- Club Birthday celebrations
  - 51<sup>st</sup> Birthday: Area 51 party and everyone dressed like an outer space alien.
  - 54<sup>th</sup> Birthday: Studio 54 Dance Party
- Invite members to brag at your meetings, charge a dollar a brag and you have extra funds.



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## Events / Activities to Encourage Member Retention and Engagement

- Invite an Altrusan you don't know to happy hour, coffee, lunch or dinner.
- Have a member getting married or having a baby? Throw them a shower.
- Host a pajama party and show a movie.
- Have a cookie swap during the holidays.
- Have a chili contest. Attend cooking classes.
- Host a "sign-up" party for committees and provide a palm reader and a Lipsologist who read lip imprints to provide entertainment.
- Conduct a carnival hosted by committee chairs playing games with the members to encourage committee sign up.
- Organize a Past Presidents Council. Host a reception for the newest club president where words of wisdom are passed on from their personal experiences.

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## Events / Activities to Encourage Member Retention and Engagement

- Decorate living Christmas Trees and a Hanukkah Bush (i.e. decorate members) and conduct a tree parade after the holiday celebration dinner. (Elvis even made an appearance.)
- Host hot chocolate and cookies or a wine and cheese reception before a meeting for members to visit each other.
- Open up the meeting venue a half hour before hand so members can visit.
- Have a group dinner after the meeting at a local restaurant.
- Host a casino night for a member's birthday party.
- Have your retention committee assign someone to **contact absent members**
- **Send cards for condolences, encouragement, club member birthday cards, etc.**
- Set up meal trains or visitor trains for members in need.
- The possibilities are endless. Whatever brings people together to have fun!

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## Poll Questions! 8



What area should your club focus on to improve engagement?

- ☐ More hands-on service opportunities
- ☐ Improve new member support
- ☐ More social events
- ☐ Stronger communication
- ☐ More leadership development
- ☐ More organized meetings

How well does your club communicate with the members?

- ☐ Very well
- ☐ Somewhat well
- ☐ Not well

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## Club Communication Effects One's Sense of Belonging

- A monthly club **newsletter** keeps members informed and connected.
- Events shared on **Facebook** and **social media** allow members to view projects and outcomes and maybe see what they are missing out on.
- **Club Eblasts** keep members updated to register for events, club meetings, projects and member happenings.
- The **calendar on the club** website reminds members of events, meetings, etc.
- The **club website** can update community members as to what your club is accomplishing. Make your website visitor friendly and train members where to find information for members only.

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## Club Communication Effects One's Sense of Belonging

- The **club meeting agendas** are an opportunity to list upcoming events, and a well written and followed agenda speeds a club meeting along.
- A **club yearbook**, lists your budgets, your members personal contact info, committee chairs, BOD, etc.
- The International and District **websites** are a plethora of information. Provide your members with instructions how to use these websites. Encourage them to explore the information that is available. I guarantee they will learn something new.

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## Poll Questions! 9



Which communication method engages you most?

- ☐ Email
- ☐ Text
- ☐ Social Media
- ☐ Phone Tree
- ☐ Club website
- ☐ Carrier pigeon
- ☐ Other (share in Chat)

What would make you more excited to attend meetings and events?

- ☐ More dynamic programs
- ☐ Shorter, organized meetings
- ☐ Increased hands-on service
- ☐ More networking and friendship building time
- ☐ If Elvis visited a meeting

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## 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."

This article was presented at Conference in Invercargill by Co-Governor Jenette Borrell.  
Attendees requested it be printed in The Kiwi Altrusan Altrusan. It was originally in the newsletter of Altrusa International of Fostoria, Ohio

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"You can't go back and change the beginning,  
 but you can start where you are and change the ending."  
 C.S. Lewis

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."  
 Mahatma Gandhi

"Altrusa isn't just what we do – it's who we become through service"  
 A Laura TC-ism

If you have ideas you would like to share, please email Laura or Debbie.

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As we wrap up, I hope you're leaving with fresh ideas, renewed energy and deeper connection to what makes Altrusa so special. Let's each commit to our own "New You"-- the version of ourselves that leads with heart, serves with purpose and lifts others through kindness and action.

Remember, every act of service – no matter how small—creates a ripple of change. Together, we make those ripples grow into waves of hope and progress in our community.

Thank you for your dedication to Altrusa, Thank you for your service and Thank you for your light. **Happy New You, Happy New Year.**

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*Thank you!*

Your 2025-2027 Membership Engagement Team:  
Laura Trainor-Collins & Debbie Llacuna

Find us in Club Runner and reach out to us! 😊

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