

**“Helping Women Make Healthy Choices for Healthy Lives”
(Specifically a choice for a safe life without family violence)**

NOMINATION FOR
MAMIE L. BASS
SERVICE AWARD

May 2008

Altrusa International, Inc., of Temple, Texas
P. O. Box 1251
Temple, Texas 76503

Club year: 2007/2008

DISTRICT NINE

Altrusa International, Inc.

Mamie L. Bass Service Award

Entry Form

Please print or type.

Name of Club: Altrusa International Inc. of Temple, Texas

Address: P. O. Box 1251

City: Temple

State/Province: Texas

Country: United States

Zip/Postal Code: 76503

Contact Person: Mary Black Pearson

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District Nine

Date (day, month, year): 31, May, 2008

Club Membership (as of date of entry): 64

Project Title: "Helping Women Make Healthy Choices for Healthy Lives"

(Specifically a choice for a safe life without family violence)

Altrusans were approached to help create a shelter for victims of family violence. Temple's only shelter had closed. In 2006, the Bell County area produced 1,734 domestic violence reports processed through the district attorneys' office. In 2007, the trend of violence was increasing rapidly and the existing shelter in Killeen was inadequate. The Leadership Team from the chamber presented a program demonstrating the needs of victims. The executive director of Families in Crisis, Inc., spoke to the membership explaining the services that could be offered.

Altrusans of Temple immediately stepped up to fund major appliances while providing hands-on collection efforts for the staples such as clothing, hygiene supplies and bedding to be used by victims in the shelter. Altrusans recognized the need for women to be able to gather around a hot cooked meal with their children in an environment that was safe and secure in an environment that allowed them the option to recover from violence while planning for a better future. A unanimous vote from the membership voted to support the new shelter with a financial donation of \$10,000.00. The journey began with a shopping trip and Altrusans formed partnerships that would create alliances across the community to increase awareness of Altrusa and the mission.

Step One: Funding—Partnership with Leadership Temple and a local retailer

Altrusans provided \$10,000.00 for the purchase of the major appliances. A local retailer assisted by selling the appliances at cost. Through this partnership the funding stretched to cover the purchase of one freezer, two refrigerators, one dishwasher, two stove and oven combinations, two vent hoods, two clothes washers, two clothes dryers and two microwaves, bedding, cleaning supplies, and over \$1500.00 in groceries for the first

residents who would inhabit the shelter. The Altrusa commitment began in June of 2007 and the shelter opened in August.

Altrusans shopped for the staples, made beds, vacuumed carpets and organized the kitchen supplies and cleaning supplies in the new shelter as it began to take shape and the opening day approached. Altrusans conducted neighborhood drives for goods to support the victims while they resided in the shelter and after they left the shelter. They collected dishes, linens, clothing, baby goods, toiletries and small appliances. Since the shelter opened in August of 2007 in Temple, over 80 victims of violence have been served with temporary shelter and safety.

Step two: Clothing—Partnership with Junior League and a local Curves owner

Providing funding for appliances and goods for a temporary shelter was only the start. At the completion of Step One, Altrusans met with members of the FIC staff to learn more about needs to serve the victims. Altrusans learned that victims often have only the clothing on their backs when they arrive at the shelters. A creative partnership was formed with the Junior League of Central Texas whose members manage a second-hand store just down the street from the shelter. This arrangement allowed donations to be made by Altrusans and others in the name of Families in Crisis and 40% of the proceeds from the sale of the goods would be converted to a store credit to be used by the residents. Altrusans gathered donations from their own households, friends and neighbors spending hours delivering goods to the store in the name of Families in Crisis. To date, over \$1600.00 in credit has accumulated to support the clothing needs of the victims.

A Spring donation drive was conducted for the victims housed in the Killeen shelter which houses up to 53 residents. Victims needed everything from furniture to shoes. This drive produced 10 truckloads of goods including items collected through a local Curves facility whose customers to donated toiletry items.

Altrusans spread the word about the needs of the facilities to many organizations and local businesses. Altrusans assisted with a fundraiser at a local country club providing information about the services of the agency and the needs of the victims. The Ladies Golf Association raised over \$60,000.00 for FIC as the enthusiasm grew. Altrusans worked with a local group that was conducting a barbecue cookoff and hundreds of pounds of meat were donated because of publicity and involvement of Altrusans.

Step three: Security—Partnership with Medical Alliance of Bell County, Master Gardeners of Bell County, Texas, Brewster Creek Construction and the Foundation of Altrusa International Inc.

“Make a Difference Day” focused on security for the Killeen shelter which was in need of repairs. Altrusans volunteered to paint, replace ceiling tiles, trim hedges, clean out flower beds and repair furnishings. Altrusans partnered with members of the Medical Alliance of Bell County and the Master Gardeners to raise funds for a new security entrance and increase available volunteers. Altrusans applied for a grant for much needed funding for the security entrance and received \$1000.00 and the Medical Alliance donated \$500.00. The contractor donated labor for the installation of the door allowing further security needs to be addressed with the money.

Step Four: Educating Members

A meeting was devoted to a program focused on a safety quiz. The quiz offered insights on avoiding situations that can pose a high risk to personal safety. Altrusans took the quiz and discussed how to keep their family members safe from violence.

In summary, Altrusans were true leaders in service donating over 225 hours of time planning donation drives, sorting clothing, painting and most importantly developing relationships with partners to efficiently meet the needs of the victims. Using their skills to publicize the project produced even more support throughout the community. Over 95% of the membership participated in some phase of the project. Two Altrusans have continued as board members with Families in Crisis. The donation of funds from the local membership had an exponential affect. Community awareness increased dramatically and resulted in over \$400,000.00 in funding and in-kind donations over the course of the year. Altrusans made a difference in thousands of lives for years to come.