



Letha H Brown Literacy Award

Entry Form

District **NINE**

Name of Altrusa Club **Altrusa International of Richardson, Inc.**
Address **P.O. Box 832101**
City **Richardson State TX**
Country **USA** Zip/Postal Code **75083-2101**
Contact Person **Jane Tucker**
Telephone **214-244-6225** Email:
contact@altrusarichardson.com
Date (day, Month, year): **June 28, 2023**
Club Membership (as of entry date): **58 Active Members plus 3 Emeritus**

Project Title: Inspiring Kindness - One Book at a Time

Inspiring Kindness - One Book at a Time

Name of Project

Nomination for Letha H Brown Literacy Award

June 28, 2023

Date

Altrusa International of **Richardson, Inc.**

PO Box 832101

Richardson, Texas 75083-2101

USA

District Nine

Club Year

2022 -20 23

Executive Summary / Synopsis:

A 60-word count synopsis of your project providing brief outline of key aspects of the project. This synopsis will not be counted towards the project description count and will not affect submission eligibility. The synopsis will be used if your awards is selected as the winning entry.

Designed as an opportunity to illustrate kindness through literacy, this project provided the book, “Her Own Two Feet”, to 41 Richardson elementary schools. During Kindness Week in February 2023, the co-author, Meredith Davis, made personal appearances at 18 of these schools to present a book review highlighting how kindness has the power to change lives.

Project Description: *(1,000-word limit)*

The purpose of this project was to use literature as a tool to show how kindness can change lives as well as give students the amazing opportunity to meet a “real” author to encourage literacy skills. The target population was elementary school age children, specifically third, fourth, and fifth graders. Club members purchased the books, arranged for their distribution, provided the funds for the author’s visits, and attended the author’s presentations.

While looking for a new project to support the Altrusa International’s goal of “One Million Lives, One Book at a Time,” our kindness committee had the idea of enhancing our existing Choose Kind Library project by showcasing a book written by an author who graduated from the Richardson Independent School District (RISD). Research by The National Literacy Trust concludes author visits to school’s boost children’s reading skills and confidence in writing. Since it had been years since an author had visited RISD elementary schools, our club members felt this project would be beneficial and started planning it. The RISD counseling department selected the book “Her Own Two Feet” co-authored by Meredith Davis because it is a true story about a 9-year-old Rwandan girl born with club feet

and depicts to young readers what having a disability can be like. A Zoom meeting with club members, school staff and the selected author occurred in Fall 2022 to finalize project plans. To promote the book, posters, study questions, and an art project were made available to school staff. Our club purchased and distributed books to 41 elementary schools making them accessible to over 22,800 students. Author visits were scheduled during “Kindness Week” in 18 schools who have Altrusa Richardson Choose Kind Libraries. With elementary students, it is important to focus on successful tactics for teaching literacy. Author visits motivate students by first promoting reading and then by motivating students to be a writer. By giving students the opportunity to interact with an author, students can develop a passion for reading and writing.

Once our club approved the project in early Spring of 2022, the school district was contacted to discuss the project. Club members worked with both the Counseling and Library Technology departments in RISD to get the project approved and select a book appropriate for Kindness Week. By May of 2022, we had received an Altrusa International Foundation Grant which, along with club money raised at our annual Outstanding Women of Today fundraiser luncheon, allowed our club to confirm tentative dates with an author. In August 2022, the school district formally approved the project. Timetable and guideline plans then proceeded through email conversations and committee meetings. A Zoom meeting in October 2022 with co-author, Meredith Davis; RISD Counseling Support Specialist, Laura Blatzheim; Director of Library and Information Technology, Alejandra Isais; and members of Altrusa Richardson finalized plans for the project. Alejandra worked directly with the school librarians to promote the book; Laura worked directly with the author to coordinate the schedule for each school’s visit; and Altrusa members organized purchasing the books, bookplates; and Altrusa members volunteered for each school’s author visit. Altrusa contacted several book distributing companies to find the best pricing and then ordered 2 books for each 41 elementary schools which were distributed to the

schools in January 2023. Bookplates were put into each book indicating the books were a Choose Kind literacy project provided by Altrusa. The final schedule for author visits was confirmed in early February 2023 and distributed to Altrusa members to sign up to attend the presentations. The RISD photographer was on hand to take pictures for the RISD's Newsletter. During the actual week of visits, both RISD employees and Altrusa members helped in chauffeuring the author to the different schools. By the end of the week, over 1,600 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders had experienced Meredith Davis's book review, which illustrated how little acts of kindness can multiply into wonderful life events. In addition to all club members being involved in this project by helping to raise money for it, 15% of our members were involved directly with the implementation of the project totaling approximately 62 hours of personal service. Overall, this project's success was due to the participation of all the RISD elementary school's staff including principals, teachers, librarians, and counselors working hand in hand with our members.

In evaluating this project, our objectives exceeded our expectations. The schools used the author visit to ignite a whole week of kindness for over 1,600 students by promoting it through art projects using butterflies depicting ways to stay strong and be kind, through wearing tie dye clothes to depict how kindness blends people together, and a pajama day to show how fun it is to snuggle up with a book. One principal posted in their school's newsletter that, "it was wonderful for our RISD Academy students to have the opportunity to make the connection to an author on campus. Our scholars are learning that writing is such a personal process. During Meredith's talk, they could see how a person's experiences can be transformed into a narrative text and then be shared with excitement. It brings to life that each of our stories have meaning and purpose." During the presentations, it was amazing to see how thrilled the students were to hear Meredith talk about her book and interact with the students through all the interesting questions they asked. Spreading the love of literacy along with illustrating how being kind can change your life will have a

lasting effect upon these students, their families, and the community. A student wrote Meredith a thank you note which said, "I love how you helped Rebekah and her leg. When I heard the story, my heart softened." The week after the author visits the school librarians met, evaluated the project, and overwhelmingly requested more author visits. This project received publicity through our club's newsletter, school newsletters, Facebook and twitter postings, all promoting Altrusa in our community.

PLEASE NOTE:

Optional Supplemental Material (No points) Judges place primary importance on the written narrative. Substantiating materials do not earn points and are considered only in a supplementary perspective.

ENTRY SUBMISSION:

Submit your entry by June 30 to the email address shown on the District Nine Webpage www.altrusadistrictnine.org under Members Only/Reports and Awards.



STRONG LIKE A BUTTERFLY



RISD Kindness Week

February 13-17, 2023



| Date | Arrival Time | Time | Learning Community | Campus | Lite Name | Lite Phone Number | Location | # of Students/Grade | Altrusa Volunteer | Altrusa Volunteer number | Notes |
|---------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 2/13/23 | 8:00 | 8:15-9:00 | BHS | Audelia Creek | Alex Gangstead | 469-593-2911 | Cafeteria | 3rd/4th (133 Students) | | | |
| 2/13/23 | 9:15 | 9:30-10:15 | BHS | Richardson Terrace | Dorothy Rhoads | 214-358-3547 | Library | 4th grade 86 students | | | park in front of school entrance |
| 2/13/23 | 10:30 | 10:45 - 11:30 | BHS | | | | | | | | |
| 2/13/23 | 1:15 | 1:30-2:15 | BHS | Forestridge | Andrea Dysput | 469-593-8532 | Library | 3rd Grade (66 students) | | | |
| 2/14/23 | 8:00 | 8:15-9:00 | LHHS | Thurgood Marshall | Kristeane Benavides | 469-593-8806 | Cafeteria | 3rd/4th - 135 students | | | |
| 2/14/23 | 9:15 | 9:30-10:15 | LHHS | Northlake | Kimo Aleman | 469-593-2283 | Library | | | | |
| 2/14/23 | 10:30 | 10:45-11:30 | LHHS | Forest Lane Academy | Cecilia Whitham | 469-593-1953 | gym | 3rd and 4th grade | | | |
| 2/14/23 | 1:15 | 1:30-2:15 | LHHS | Wallace | Lalinda Mirsky | 469-593-2606 | Library | 3rd grade | | | 85 students |
| 2/15/23 | 8:00 | 8:15-9:00 | RHS | RISD Academy | Caroline Ritzer | 469-593-3362 | Auditorium | 3rd & 4th Gr 209 students | | | |
| 2/15/23 | 9:15 | 9:30-10:15 | RHS | Spring Valley | Lauren Dean | 469-593-4612 | Library | 3rd and 4th 90 students | | | |
| 2/15/23 | 10:30 | 10:45-11:30 | BHS | Yale | Sergio Arzac | 979-676-0364 (cell) | Library | | | | |
| 2/16/23 | 8:00 | 8:15-9:00 | BHS | O. Henry Elementary | Linda Brown | 214-476-7403 | Library | 4th & 5th grade | | | |
| 2/16/23 | 9:15 | 9:30-10:15 | PHS | Greenwood Hills | Kim Sierra | 972-333-4352 (cell) | Cafeteria | 3rd & 4th(120 students) | | | |
| 2/16/23 | 10:30 | 10:45-11:30 | PHS | Northrich | Shelly Kraal | 214-773-8851 (cell) | Library | 3rd & 4th grade | | | |
| 2/16/23 | 1:15 | 1:30-2:15 | LHHS | Alkin Elementary | Charley Phan | 469-545-8232 | Library | | | | |
| 2/17/23 | 8:00 | 8:15-9:00 | BHS | Jess Harben. | Christina Merta | 469-593-8804 | Library | 3rd & 4th Grade 81 students total | | | Parking: There is a public pool directly next door. This will be the easiest place for parking the day she comes in. The pool isn't open so we park there all the time and our parking is limited. |
| 2/17/23 | 9:15 | 9:30-10:15 | BHS | Springridge | Veronica Buttry | 469-593-8621 | Library | 3rd & 4th Grade: about 85 students | | | You can park in the front circle drive |
| 2/17/23 | 10:30 | 10:45-11:30 | BHS | Big Springs | Jenell Rosol | 460-593-8066 | Library | 5th grade, 45 | | | |
| 2/17/23 | 1:15 | 1:30 - 2:15 | LHHS | Skyview | Mary McWilliams | 214-562-0559 (Cell) | Gym | 168 3rd & 4th | | | As you pull in the circle drive the office is at the furthest entrance with the stairs. You can park in the outside lane, but you will need to depart by 2:45. If you think you will be after 2:45 I would suggest parking across the street. |

BE STRONG LIKE A BUTTERFLY



HER OWN TWO FEET: A Rwandan Girl's Brave Fight to Walk

BY MEREDITH DAVIS AND REBEKA UWITONZE

If you'd like for your colored butterfly to appear on Meredith's website, go to meredithldavis.com/coloring-page/ to upload.

Coming events

| | | | |
|-----|----|------|---|
| Mar | 1 | | Volunteer Hours Due |
| Mar | 1 | 1:30 | Ability House, Kathleen's birthday |
| Mar | 8 | | International Women's Day |
| Mar | 9 | 6:30 | Board of Directors Meeting Friends Place |
| Mar | 16 | 6:30 | March Business Meeting |
| Mar | 20 | 6:30 | Bridge - Jean Stuart's home |
| Mar | 25 | 9:00 | Lone Star Book Movers |
| Mar | 25 | 9:30 | Spring Leadership Event Friends Place |
| Mar | 27 | 6:00 | AWCLS (Book Club) at Marsha Peters' home. "Black Cake" |
| Mar | 28 | 6:00 | AWCLS Day After - via Zoom |
| Apr | 1 | | KAN WEEKEND |

Birthdays

| | | |
|-----|----|------------------|
| Mar | 1 | Sharon Nash |
| Mar | 2 | Sarah Wagner |
| Mar | 3 | Ginger Mayo |
| Mar | 14 | Mary Shiroma |
| Mar | 17 | Barbara Berthold |
| Mar | 20 | Thanh Tran |
| Mar | 27 | Ann Payne |

Ability House WHAT A PARTY!!!!!!

By Sherri White



Altrusans hosted a birthday party for Crystal at Ability House on Saturday, February 18! So much laughing, clapping, singing and FUN was had by all! The birthday girl, Crystal, was given gifts arranged by Donna Buhr. Crystal received new head phones, two new shirts and a stuffed animal that plays music. Crystal's laughing, clapping and smiling while holding her new stuffed animal was priceless.

A huge shout out to Rosemary Gouger who made the cutest Teddy Bear Cupcakes that you can imagine. Crystal, Shelly, Vera, Kathleen, Nina and Jane were all so excited about the cupcakes and every bite was eaten. Crystal's parents were also at

the party. A huge thanks to all the Altrusans that were there to join in Crystal's birthday party. Hope you can join us at Ability House on February 25th to celebrate Vera's birthday and on March 4th for Kathleen's party. You are guaranteed to leave with a full heart!

Altrusa Sponsors Author Visits for RISD Kindness Week

By Jane Tucker



During RISD "Kindness Week", our club was able to sponsor a special event made possible through an Altrusa International Foundation Grant. Third, fourth and fifth graders from 18 elementary schools who have our Altrusa Choose Kind Libraries were able to hear a book review by Meredith Davis, a Richardson native who graduated from Berkner High School. Starting on February 12, co-author of "Her Own Two Feet" Meredith Davis, visited Audelia Creek Elementary School and continued visiting schools through the week until she finished on Friday afternoon at Skyview Elementary School.

Over 1,600 children were thrilled to hear her presentation, listened intently, and asked so many interesting questions. The librarians, many of whom had never had an author visit, were so happy to have the opportunity to host her visit and had done so much advance preparation to enhance her presentation. Each school had butterflies the children had decorated hanging all over the halls and libraries as Meredith believes we can all "be strong like a butterfly".

The whole content of the book and her presentation illustrates how little acts of kindness can multiply into wonderful life events if you are only willing to take that one chance to change your life. This is what happened to Rebeka Uwitonze, a 9-year-old Rwandan girl born with club feet who gets the opportunity to come to America through the generosity of strangers and have her feet surgically