

## Chapter Seven: ASTRA

ASTRA is a volunteer organization for youth/young adults sponsored by local Altrusa Clubs as part of their overall community service program. ASTRA is an acronym for:

**Ability**—to know all of us have special talents to share with others

**Service**—to improve the lives of those less fortunate in the community

**Training**—to develop leadership ability and potential

**Responsibility**—to learn to accept obligations and know the satisfaction of carrying projects through to a successful conclusion

**Achievement**—to experience success; to know a group can accomplish so much more than any one individual

Through ASTRA and with the help of each Club's Altrusan advisers, ASTRA members are provided opportunities to learn leadership skills, personal development, career planning and preparation, as well as citizenship development.

The sponsoring Altrusa Club supports the ASTRA Club with two or more Altrusa members, usually including the ASTRA Committee Chair. These Altrusans guide ASTRA Club members to develop program plans and service projects. ASTRA is a very important part of our membership program. A successful and satisfying experience in ASTRA can lead eventually to Altrusa membership. As Club President, your role is a supportive one. Dedicate some time during your planning meeting with your membership to discuss sponsoring an ASTRA Club. You just might be able to motivate your members to become involved in ASTRA. An ASTRA today just may be an Altrusan in the near future.

To find all the information and documents needed to sponsor and support an ASTRA Club go to the Altrusa International website [ASTRA page](#). If your Club does not currently sponsor an ASTRA Club, make sure it is discussed during the planning meeting prior to, or at the beginning of, your Presidential year. For additional information, contact the International ASTRA Chair at [astra@altrusa.org](mailto:astra@altrusa.org) and your District ASTRA Chair.

It is very important at least one ASTRA Advisor provides their email address and contact information to the Altrusa International office so important communication regarding ASTRA is received and shared with the ASTRA Club as well as the sponsoring Altrusa Club.

There are tremendous advantages to having an ASTRA Club (or two, or three, or more) sponsored by your Altrusa Club. First and foremost, ASTRA Clubs and their members bring youthful energy to an Altrusa Club. They may not have a lot of time to plan an event, but ASTRA members have the energy and drive to lend their services for the success of an event. ASTRA fosters the concept of service through practical application in school and community. When working side-by-side with Altrusans, ASTRA members benefit from the experience offered by the sponsoring Altrusa Club members. In working together on projects, Altrusa members have the opportunity to shape the future of ASTRA members by making them a part of the Altrusa family in the present for Altrusa's future.

The future of Altrusa and ASTRA are intertwined. The two groups cannot work together without affecting each other: ASTRA members bring a sense of youth to Altrusa members, and Altrusa members bring life experience including positive effects gained through serving one's community through membership in Altrusa.

### Making an ASTRA Club Successful

Generally speaking, keeping an ASTRA Club successful refers to keeping it going year after year. Due to the nature of it comprising an ever-changing body of students, membership makeup will be fluid. Just as school sports teams change each year according to the composition of students and their

various skills, so too will ASTRA Clubs be the same, only different, each year. Understanding that element is helpful to the Advisers' mindset. However, consistency is possible and necessary in certain areas of an ASTRA Club.

Some key elements to a successful ASTRA Club include:

- Meeting as a general membership at least once a month
- Having a project and/or program at the meeting
- Altrusa members who are devoted to ASTRA and keeping it going through thick and thin
- Practicing parliamentary procedure on a level ASTRA members can understand
- Including a school contact (staff member)
- Expecting ASTRA members to bring project ideas to be explored and carried out
- Bringing project ideas to the ASTRA members for them to choose, a list of suggested ASTRA Club Service Projects is available on the website
- Having the ASTRA and Altrusa Clubs work together on projects for each Club
- Understanding while students are very busy and cannot do everything they want to, they need to be held accountable to the Club, its meetings, and projects
- Utilizing local press to spread the word of ASTRA's great involvement and service to the community
- Getting contact information of the ASTRA Club Advisor to the International office for all communications, updates and important announcements regarding ASTRA

### **ASTRA Benefits**

Altrusa annually recognizes ASTRA Clubs and outstanding ASTRA members. The Altrusa Foundation funds the ASTRA Service Award at District Conferences as well as biennially at International Conventions.

Scholarships are available to ASTRA members continuing their education at a technical school, college, university, etc. The Altrusa Foundation funds the scholarships to ASTRA members who demonstrate outstanding community service, leadership skills, and potential. This commitment from the Altrusa Foundation validates its appreciation of the importance of ASTRA to Altrusa's future. Scholarship information, criteria, eligibility and applications will be provided each year and are available online through the International website ASTRA page.

Graduation Honor Cords for Service are available to high school and college ASTRA members in good standing. These can be ordered, at no charge, through the International office. A list of graduate's names should accompany the request for cords so that a letter of congratulations can also be provided.

### **ASTRA Annual Club Report**

The Annual Club Report will be sent to all ASTRA Club Advisors through email in the form of a Survey Monkey and is due each year by May 31<sup>st</sup>. Once again, it is important each ASTRA Club has an ASTRA Club Advisor who has provided the Altrusa International office with their email address and contact information. The report will not be used as a means of judging ASTRA Clubs. It is simply a tool for Altrusa International to collect information.