

Altrusa Dallas recognized by DISD

STAFFREPORT

Altrusa of Dallas received an award from Dallas Independent School District as a finalist for the 2005-06 Outstanding Organization Partner of the Year, handed out May 4 at the district's annual luncheon.

The club was also recognized for its volunteer hours with the DISD Copper Award.

Michelle May, president of Altrusa Dallas and a North Dallas attorney, accepted the awards on behalf of the club, assisted by Sandra Blassingame, chairwoman of the City Park Elementary projects for the club and North Dallas resident; Floy Bourn, also a North Dallas resident; and Betty Lawson.

Altrusa Dallas, a service organization comprising dedicated professionals who are committed to contributing to the welfare of the community and assisting those in need, has partnered with City Park Elementary since 1997. "Altrusa has provided a constant source of dedicated service to our school, our teachers, our children and our parents," said Patricia Enselek, library media



SPECIAL RECOGNITION: Altrusa Dallas members receive DISD awards from City Park Elementary School officials. Pictured, from left, are members Betty Lawson and Floy Bourn, project chair Sandra Blassingame, Altrusa Dallas president Michelle May, City Park library media specialist Patricia Enselek and City Park principal Graciela Pontus.

specialist at the school. "They are constantly looking for ways that they can be of service to our school and our children."

In 1999, Altrusa Dallas started a store for the students, which is used as incentives for students to encourage personal responsibility and accountability. Students have a point system based on school and district guidelines for behavior, school attendance, homework and dress code.

The Altrusa volunteers purchase items, set up the store and run the store each six weeks.

"The excitement in the air on Altrusa Store Day is electrifying," Enselek said. "Seeing the smiles on the students' faces as they peruse the items in the store with their tickets in hand is confirmation that the store is a wonderful system. The love and devotion oozes from the Altrusa volunteers as they help each student in our school shop. The Altrusa Store is truly a positive and rewarding experience for all."

In 2000, Altrusa Dallas began Social Skills Saturday for the fifth- and sixth-grade students. The children are treated to a full sit-down, catered dinner — complete with linen tablecloths, china and stemware. The children are introduced to etiquette and social skills and hear from a motivational speaker.

The Sunshine Room project was started in 2002 by Altrusa Dallas. The organization keeps it stocked with clothing items such

as shirts, pants, shoes, socks, underwear and toiletries.

"Since our children are required to wear uniforms this year, Altrusa pitched right in and provided uniforms for over 150 of our students," Enselek said. "When the weather started turning cold, Altrusa donated over 60 coats to our school."

Yvonne Ramirez, a teacher for prekindergarten students and adult English learners, said, "It has been a pleasure to have Altrusa as a partner of City Park Elementary. They have not only provided items such as uniforms and supplies for our students, but they have also given so much of their time and support to City Park students, parents and staff."

"Altrusa has been a driving force of support and continuing community involvement at City Park Elementary. The Altrusa Store has enabled me as an educator to provide a solid incentive for my students for the past five years," said Linda Gonzalez, a fourth- and fifth-grade language arts teacher.

"The redecorating of our parent room was a priceless and thoughtful gift to our campus. I believe the warmth of the redecorating has helped our adult English classes to be a smashing success," she said.

Information for this report was submitted by Michelle May, a North Dallas resident and president of Altrusa Dallas.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

AWARD TO BE PROUD OF: Michelle May, president of Altrusa Dallas and a North Dallas attorney, accepts the DISD award on behalf of the club.

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