

Helping Darien seniors
live independently,
comfortably and with
dignity in their own
homes and the community
as long as possible

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OUT AND ABOUT

FALL 2013

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 3

Think Positive



Dear Friends –

Is the glass half empty or half full? This expression demonstrates that a particular situation can be a cause for optimism (half full) or pessimism (half empty), and speaks to an individual's point of view. How do you see things? Being optimistic and happy has many positive effects on our lives and we are encouraged to lead life with this attitude. This issue of our newsletter is dedicated to just that – enjoy!

We are very happy to announce our new name... **At Home in Darien**. Aging in Place+Gallivant was the result of the merger of two organizations, and our mission of helping Darien seniors remains the same. Going forward, we hope to provide even better services! We are excited to take our transportation dispatch in-house this fall, and look forward to speaking to you and arranging for your transportation needs. Please see the articles on the back page for more details about our new name and dispatching.

We invite you to mark your calendar for our **Annual Luncheon** on Tuesday, October 22nd at 11:30 a.m. at the Darien Community Association. This lovely event is free for all Darien seniors and promises to be a good time as we learn about the benefits of laughter. Please see the box to the right for more information and rsvp as soon as possible to save your seat.

You are also invited to our **Annual Meeting** on Monday, December 9th at 10:00 a.m. at the Darien Library. Join our Board of Directors for refreshments and learn more about our plans for the coming year. We are here for you – give us a call!

All the best,

Gina

Gina Z. Blum, Executive Director, **At Home in Darien**

You're invited!

Join the **At Home in Darien**
Board of Directors at their

Annual Meeting
Monday, December 9, 2013
at 10:00 a.m.

Darien Library Community Room, 1441 Post Road
Join us for refreshments and learn more about
how we meet the needs of seniors in Darien.

RSVP by December 2nd **203-585-4094** or
Sandi@AtHomeinDarien.org

At Home in Darien and The Darien Community Association invite you to attend the



Laugh Twice and Call Me in the Morning

Featuring

Dr. Stephen Jones

Chief Safety Officer / Director, Outpatient Center
for Healthy Aging at Greenwich Hospital

Join us for an entertaining and informative presentation on the benefits of laughter. Learn how to laugh your way to better health—from reducing stress to controlling pain. This fun event will provide tips for adding humor into your life.

Tuesday, October 22, 2013
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Come at 11:30 and browse our informational tables. Lunch will be served at noon, followed by the speaker.

Darien Community Association
274 Middlesex Road, Darien

Free presentation and lunch
for all Darien Seniors

RSVP by October 11th
Space is limited, please respond early to ensure a seat at this popular event.

203-585-4094
or
Sandi@AtHomeinDarien.org

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**AT HOME
IN DARIEN**
CONNECTING SENIORS TO COMMUNITY
P.O. Box 1242
Darien, CT 06820

**Need help with leaf raking this fall or
shoveling snow from
your public sidewalk
this winter?**

Please call
At Home in Darien
203-585-4094



Or email **Sandi@AtHomeinDarien.org**



Fountain of Youth Refreshes!

Elizabeth Paris, Darien Senior Activities Center Coordinator

“There is a fountain of youth; it is in your mind, your talents, the creativity you bring to your life and the lives of people you love. When you learn to tap this source, you truly will have defeated age.” — Sophia Loren

Good News! The Fountain of Youth does exist! What we have to do to “get refreshed” is to be willing participants in this adventure we call life...at EVERY age! Darienites are fortunate to live in a town that has so many fine resources that encourage senior residents to engage in programs and activities—daily nourishment from the fountain of youth.

As I witness the aging process in our residents, I am inspired by the many seniors who choose to be involved and active at a level they are comfortable with and physically able to enjoy. They know their willingness and desire to participate creates endless possibilities of enjoyment and happiness for them.

Equally inspiring to me are the folks that take on the task of learning a new language, taking a writing course, trying their hand at an art or craft project, or are open to expanding their knowledge on topics such as world politics, religion, and cultures. As the Darien Senior Activities Center is set to move to its new location in early 2014, we anticipate offering even more events and programs that will keep the fountain of youth flowing, “refreshed” and keep our seniors engaged in and connected to the world at large!

Pearls of Wisdom — My Secrets for Aging Gracefully

By Joan Blumenfeld, MS, LPC, Geriatric Care Manager

“Amazing!” “Amazing!” “Amazing!” repeated the young woman I was chatting with at the party. Amazing referred to her astonishment at my appearance and my sparkle which did not fit her idea of a “woman of a certain age”; it was about her astonishment at my looking and acting so many years younger than my chronological age. “Tell me your secret”, she pleaded. I gave that request considerable thought. This is my personal secret formula for aging gracefully: First of all, this is what I don’t do: I don’t submit to collagen or Botox treatments or various nips and tucks that could streamline my body. I don’t take anti-aging supplements and I don’t use anti-aging creams. I loath the concept of anything being anti-aging. The phrase reeks of prejudice against me and a whole group of remarkable women.

What I do believe has helped me age gracefully are good genes, good luck, and good attitude. In addition, I keep moving, remain slim, stay connected and continue to work.

Let me elucidate. The first three parts of my secret formula, good genes, good luck and good attitude are instructions that were posted in my internist’s office. I take them seriously. While we have little control over genes or luck, attitude is another story.

Good genes mean choosing your parents carefully so you do not inherit a propensity for serious illness or low intelligence. But genes are only one part of the story.

Good luck is another and is often a question of fate, although you can help good luck along with some common sense.

Good attitude is the part you can mold for yourself. To me good attitude means qualities that help you survive life’s challenges with spirit. Those qualities are flexibility, adaptability, resourcefulness and curiosity. Welcoming new ideas, people and adventures into my life, remaining playful and full of wonder all help me feel and appear younger than I am.

I keep moving. I know from professional experience that to stop moving is to invite atrophy of mind and muscles. I attend ballet class twice a week if time permits. I try to walk every day if only for a few short strolls with my dog. I use stairs when possible and

park at the far end of the parking lot at the mall. Moving feels good to my body, my brain and my soul.

I stay slim so my knees and other body parts are not carrying around a lot of excess weight. I feel better about myself and can even wear funky hip clothing.

I stay connected to my family. As my brother says, “Family is hard to come by and easy to lose”. I nurture old friendships and make new ones from all generations. The younger set are not talking about aches and pains and losses but about kids and babies and college applications, business triumphs and setbacks and all the fullness of life which I find energizing and interesting.

I work because I want to and I can. I need to have something meaningful and useful to do to maintain my positive attitude towards the world and myself. And quite frankly, I love the power of earning money!

I am deeply grateful for and humbled by my good genes and good luck. Maintaining my upbeat attitude is a work in progress!

Pearl of Wisdom: Find your own secret formula for aging gracefully. You may or may not look years younger than you are, but your spirit will soar in spite of the significant challenges of aging.

Humor in Your Life

By Peter F. Eder

There is increasing scientific, physical and mental evidence that humor is an effective prescription, with no-negative-side-effects, for senior health maintenance. The ability to laugh at yourself, by yourself and with others is a proven supplement that comes in doses of smiles, chuckles, tee-hees and belly laughs.

A humorous spirit can help us lift ourselves and others up and bear the unbearable. Here are a few ideas for finding, creating and enjoying humor.

• **Read the Comics**

Comic strips made their appearance in U.S. newspapers in 1887, and the earliest and still appearing strip, the Katzenjammer Kids, began in 1876. Our daily and weekend newspapers offer a continuing stream of fun and adventure.

And if you are Internet savvy, you can follow your favorites on web sites such as www.gocomics.com or www.stus.com (the latter being Stu’s Comic Strip Connection).

• **Watch Funny Films**

The last time I visited the main floor of the Darien Library, there were seventeen shelves in the “Comedy” section (about 50 DVDs on a shelf), waiting to be borrowed (the library catalogs almost 1200 titles). Plan to watch a funny film a week. You can select from classics going back to Buster Keaton to today’s Woody Allen hits. You’ll also be able to find sets of TV comic classics.

And if that’s not convenient, just check your TV listings. Chances are good you’ll find a show that is sure to get you laughing.

• **Read to Children**

Find a child (relative or neighbor) to read to weekly. It’s another great way to exercise your funny bones. Countless classics and modern children books are based on humor. It is a great way to help educate small children, while enjoying the story lines and illustrations of silly situations.

• **Re-label Yourself and Share it with Others**

Glancing at yourself occasionally in a mirror can be a scary or a happy opportunity. Consider turning the wrinkles into twinkles, the creases into laugh lines, the sags into satisfactions. You’ll feel better in an eye blink.

If you’ve got some free time, reflect on, and record those occasions when you’ve had a good laugh on yourself and share it with dear ones who also have positive attitudes.

I can recall a day years ago, when I was rushing to catch MetroNorth to my New York City office. It was a lovely spring day and I was feeling stylish. When I got to the office a co-worker approached me, smiling and saying: “you are really making a fashion statement today”. I felt good about that, until I followed his gaze which was focused on my shoes ... my right brown shoe, my left black shoe. (Unfortunately while it attracted attention, it never became a fad.)

Laughter sure does contribute to positive attitudes and happiness. Will Rogers said the following words worth remembering, “We’re all here for a spell; get all the good laughs you can.”

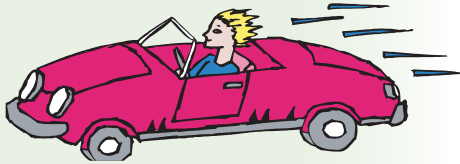
Have No Regrets

By Noelle Zeller, LCSW, Caring Hospice Services

We can all learn something from this article written by a nurse who had the chance to interview people in their final stages of life. If we were able to follow these simple steps, we could be happier and healthier people.

People grow a lot when they are faced with their own mortality. Every single person can find peace in their final stage. When questioned about any regrets they had or anything they would do differently, common themes surfaced. Following are the most common:

1. Have the courage to live a life true to oneself, not the life others expected of you. This was the most common regret of all. When people realize that their life is almost over and look back clearly on it, it is easy to see how many dreams have gone unfulfilled. Most people have not accomplished even half of their dreams. It’s important to try to honor at least some of your dreams along the way. It’s too late once you lose your health. Health brings a freedom very few realize, until we no longer have it.



2. Don’t work so hard. A great number of people deeply regretted spending so much of their lives on the treadmill of a work existence. They missed their children’s youth and their partner’s companionship. By simplifying your lifestyle and making conscious choices along the way, it is possible to not need the income that you think you do. And by creating more space in your life, you become happier and more open to new opportunities, ones more suited to your new lifestyle.



3. Have the courage to express your feelings. Many people suppressed their feelings in order to keep peace with others. As a result, they settled for a mediocre existence and never became who they were truly capable of becoming. Many even developed illnesses relating to bitterness and resentment. We cannot control the reactions of others. However, although people may initially react when you change the way you are by speaking honestly, in the end it raises the relationship to a whole new and healthier level. Either that or it releases the unhealthy relationship from your life. Either way, you win.

4. Stay in touch with your friends. Many folks become so caught up in their own lives that they let golden friendships slip by over the years. There were many deep regrets about not giving friendships the time and effort they deserved. It is common for anyone in a busy lifestyle to let friendships slip. But when you are faced with your approaching mortality, the physical details of life fall away. It is not money or status that holds the true importance. It all comes down to love and relationships in the end.

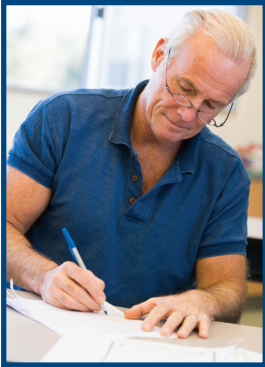


5. Let yourself be happier. Many don’t realize until it’s too late that happiness is a choice. Don’t sit stuck in old patterns and habits. Fear of change has us pretending to others, and to ourselves, that we are content. Deep within, we long to laugh properly and have silliness in our life again.

Life is a choice. It is your life. Choose consciously, choose wisely and choose honestly. Choose happiness.

The Magic of Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning is the process of keeping your mind and body engaged, at any age, by actively pursuing knowledge and new experiences. The pursuit of knowledge through lifetime learning has wonderful benefits for seniors, such as:



- ✓ Keeps your mind sharp
- ✓ Improves memory
- ✓ Increases self-confidence
- ✓ Gives you a feeling of accomplishment
- ✓ Helps you meet people who share your interests
- ✓ Builds skills you already have or offers an opportunity to learn a new skill
- ✓ Gives you a new interest that you can share with others

Keep mentally, physically and socially active with **Lifetime Learners Institute**. This non-profit organization has been offering adult education daytime courses without stress or tests for people over 50 for 21 years at nearby **Norwalk Community College**.

Consider attending one or more of their over 40 upcoming fall courses starting in September. Some examples of course offerings include: *The Fun of Writing your Memoirs*, *Meditation: Practical and Inspirational*, *What the Great Poets Say About Life*, *The Joy of Reading Short Stories*, *Learn Spanish for Enjoyment*, *The Arm Chair Travelers*, *Life Lessons via Hinduism*. There are many more inspiring and enjoyable classes about music, art, literature, languages, religion, computers, current events, and travel.

Each of these courses meets only once a week for 2 hours at either 1 or 3pm, Monday thru Thursday, and at 10am Fridays, for either 4, 6, or 8 weeks. Each course costs only \$30.00 for members with a 12-month \$50.00 annual membership.

As an extra perk, members also enjoy free use of NCC’s fitness center and special guest presentations each Friday afternoon. For a Fall Course Catalog either phone 203-857-3330 to request a copy or visit www.lifetimelearners.org. **Enjoy the Magic!**

Healthier and Happier?

By Elaine Abrams, MPH, RN,
Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County

There is no doubt that healthy people report being happier, but can being happy and having a positive attitude lead to better health outcomes?



This question has been pondered by health professionals, psychologists, sociologists and researchers alike. A vast amount of research does indicate that negative emotions such as chronic anxiety, pessimism and depression are associated with chronic disease and a shorter life span. So does this mean that exhibiting optimism results in the opposite effect? The answer seems to be an overwhelming “yes.”

A 2007 Harvard School of Public Health study by Dr. Laura Kubansky that followed more than 6,000 men and women aged 25 to 74 over 2 decades showed a correlation between emotional vitality—a sense of enthusiasm, of hopefulness, of engagement in life, and the ability to face life’s stresses with emotional balance—and a reduced risk of heart disease.

In addition, research suggests that adults with certain personal attributes, whether inborn or externally-shaped, seem to help avoid or manage chronic diseases including stroke, heart disease, diabetes, and depression.

Here is a list of those personal attributes:

- **Emotional vitality:** a sense of enthusiasm, hopefulness, engagement.
- **Optimism:** the perspective that good things will happen, and that one’s actions account for the good things that occur in life.
- **Supportive networks of family and friends.**
- **Bouncing back from stressful challenges** and knowing that things will eventually look up again.
- **Choosing healthy behaviors** such as physical activity and healthy nutrition.
- **Avoiding risky behaviors** such as unsafe sex, drinking alcohol to excess, and overeating.

But some public health professionals argue that the beneficial effects of positive emotions stem only from the fact that happier people have less negative moods and are thus less likely to engage in destructive health habits. Kubzansky and others disagree. They believe that there is more to the phenomenon—and that scientists are “only beginning to glean the possible biological, behavioral, and cognitive mechanisms.”

Kubzansky LD, Kawachi I. “Going to the Heart of the Matter: Negative Emotions and Coronary Heart Disease.” *Psychosomatic Research*, 2000.



At Home in Darien provides the following services to all Darien residents age 60+:



Transportation within Darien, Stamford, Norwalk and New Canaan, Monday - Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Telephone referral, advice and counsel.



**Communication and Programs —
Out and About newsletter.**

Monthly email blasts promoting events and services.

Social and educational programs throughout the town.



Handy Services —

Volunteers including Friendly Visitors, Shoppers, Helpers and Drivers along with seasonal services such as snow shoveling and leaf raking.

Referrals to discounted vetted service providers such as:

Appliance Repair

Landscapers

Computer Services

Plumbers

Electricians

Repairmen

Hairdressers

Small Chores

Handymen

and more!

**Call At Home in Darien at
203-585-4094
for free information**



**When you need a ride within
Darien, Stamford, Norwalk
and New Canaan, call**

203-655-2227

24-hour advance notice required
Voluntary contributions are appreciated

We Have a New Name!

To more clearly communicate our mission of helping Darien Seniors live independently, comfortably and with dignity in their own homes, Aging in Place+Gallivant has renamed itself, **At Home in Darien**.

Formed almost three years ago by the creation of Aging in Place and a subsequent merger with Gallivant (the senior transportation service established more than twenty years ago), **At Home in Darien** is a more reflective identifier of our purpose and programs.

A new graphic identity is simultaneously being introduced, thanks to 341 Studios, a Darien marketing and design firm. A set of symbols depicts the array of services and the tag line “connecting seniors to community” has been incorporated into the design.

There are almost two hundred aging in place organizations around the U.S. who have similar missions. Darien has been at the forefront of this national initiative, focused on communities. Every Darien resident sixty and over is automatically a member of **At Home in Darien**. The organization also strives to assist families as they handle the needs of aging parents.

By working with existing public and private institutions like Darien Human Services, the Darien Senior Activities Center, The Darien Community Association, the Darien Library, the Community Fund of Darien, and with regional, state, and national organizations, **At Home in Darien** provides access to, and enhances programs and services supporting seniors wanting to remain in their homes.



Peter Eder, Board Vice President, Gina Blum, Executive Director, and Sandi Kornblum, Office Coordinator, display the previous and the new logo designs.

Transportation Dispatch News

We are excited that **At Home in Darien** will dispatch rides directly.

Call us at the same number, **203-655-2227**, to make a reservation Monday – Friday between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m.

24 hour notice is appreciated for all reservations.

**When you need a ride, follow these simple instructions:
Call 203-655-2227**

Please have the following information ready to give Gina or Sandi:

- 1. Day and Date you need the ride**
- 2. Time of your Appointment (if you have one)**
- 3. Time you would like to be picked up**
- 4. Exact address you are to be picked up from**
- 5. Exact address of your destination**
- 6. Whether you need the wheelchair accessible van, if you use a walker or a wheelchair, or if you have an aide or companion accompanying you**
- 7. Return trip information, if needed**

If you get our voicemail, please leave the same information listed above.

We will call you back to confirm the ride.



Catch the Wave!

**The Darien High School Football Team
invites YOU to become a Blue Wave Football Fan!**

Please join the parents & fans as they cheer the team on during the 2013 football season. Admission is free to those age 65 and over.

**We hope to see you at the games!
2013 DHS Football Captains & Team**

Home Game Schedule:

September 12 vs Hillhouse @4pm
September 21 vs Greenwich @2pm
October 19 vs Trinity Catholic @1:30pm
October 26 vs Ridgefield @1:30pm
November 2 vs Wilton @1:30pm

Thanks for your Support!

At Home in Darien is supported by hundreds of people from all over the town of Darien. Are you one of them? We depend on your support to continue to serve Darien’s senior citizens. We are a private, tax-exempt, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

Please send a generous gift today to:
At Home in Darien,
P.O. Box 1242, Darien, CT 06820.

Thank you.

