

our mission:
“Helping Darien seniors
live independently,
comfortably and with
dignity in their own
homes and the community
as long as possible”

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Dear Friends –

Recently a senior couple stopped by my office to learn more about services that were available to them. Earlier this year they had a health emergency and they learned the hard way that making good decisions during a stressful situation was difficult when they weren't well informed.

There are other Darien seniors, and those who care about them, who are also unaware of, or perhaps even befuddled by, where they can turn for help, or how they can take advantage of senior benefits. We saw this in the comments we received in our town wide **Senior Survey** (see article on page 3 for summary of results).

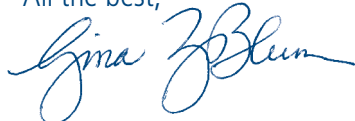
It is our hope that this issue of our newsletter will help clarify the services we offer, and also shed light on what else is available for Darien seniors. As a private not for profit organization, **At Home In Darien** offers helpful services that can't be found anywhere else in our community, and we collaborate with other senior service providers to provide seamless service to seniors.

We invite you to attend our **Annual Luncheon** on Tuesday, October 27th which is free for all Darien seniors (see information to the right), and you are also invited to our **Annual Meeting** on Tuesday, December 8th (see information below) to hear first-hand about all that we do for Darien seniors and their loved ones.

And lastly, we are excited to announce that we are rolling out a new **Membership Card** program which will get seniors discounts at participating retailers and priority sign-in at our events. Please see back page for more information.

We are here to help you – give us a call! **203.655.2227**

All the best,



Gina Z. Blum, Executive Director, **At Home In Darien**
Gina@AtHomeInDarien.org



You're invited!

Join the **At Home In Darien**
Board of Directors at their
Annual Meeting
Tuesday, December 8, 2015
at 10:00 a.m.
Darien Library Community Room,
1440 Post Road

Join us for refreshments and learn more about
how we meet the needs of seniors in Darien.

RSVP by December 1st **203.655.2227** or
Sandi@AtHomeInDarien.org



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



At Home In Darien Annual Luncheon

An Integrative Approach to Stress Management

Featuring

Dr. Katherine Takayasu

**Join us for an interesting and
informative presentation!**

Regardless of age or gender, we all have stress – our relationships, our finances, our jobs or retirement, or just managing balance each day. Many Americans are over-stressed, and this can have significant health consequences. Come learn as Integrative Medicine physician Dr. Katie Takayasu discusses stress management techniques incorporating the best of nutrition, exercise, sleep and mind-body techniques.

**Tuesday, October 27, 2015
11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.**

**Darien Community Association
274 Middlesex Road, Darien**

**Free presentation and lunch
for all Darien Seniors**

RSVP by October 19th
Space is limited, please respond early to
ensure a seat to this popular event.

203.655.2227
or

Sandi@AtHomeInDarien.org



Katherine Takayasu, M.D., completed her two-year fellowship in Integrative Medicine at Stamford Hospital's Center for Integrative Medicine & Wellness and the University of Arizona. She earned her medical degree and Master in Business Administration from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. A board certified family doctor, Dr. Takayasu completed her residency in Family Medicine at New York Presbyterian Hospital – Columbia University in New York City.



WHO is At Home In Darien?

At Home In Darien is an innovative aging in place program which helps Darien seniors to remain in their home in a safe, healthy and socially connected environment.

WHAT does At Home In Darien do?

- Door to door transportation by professional drivers, by sedan or handicap accessible minivan, within Darien, Stamford, Norwalk and New Canaan every weekday between 9am and 4pm.
- Trustworthy volunteers including:
 - Drivers who assist with rides outside of At Home’s service area or hours.
 - Visitors who provide ongoing companionship and support.
 - Shoppers who run errands and grocery shop for homebound seniors.
 - Helpers who take care of small tasks in a senior’s home.
- Acts as a resource to seniors and their families by providing advice and connecting them to assistance in the community.
- Provides referral to vetted health and home care professionals, and property and home maintenance services, giving seniors reliable references and peace of mind.
- Publishes and mails **Out & About**, a newsletter three times a year to every mailbox in Darien, full of valuable information of interest to seniors and their loved ones.

- Serves as a central source to consolidate information from many organizations regarding community opportunities, events and news and shares it with seniors on a monthly basis via print and email distribution.

WHY does At Home In Darien do this?

We provide services that aren’t provided by any other source in order to meet the needs of Darien seniors. We collaborate with the Town and other organizations that serve seniors. See below for services offered by Darien Senior Program at Mather Center and Darien Human Services, and the Darien Commission on Aging.

WHERE does At Home In Darien do this?

Our office is located in Mather Center, adjacent to Town Hall at 2 Renshaw Road. We can be easily accessed by using the ramp entrance in Town Hall’s main circle, or through the Senior Program’s entrance of the Mather Center and then taking the stairs or elevator to the 2nd floor. We are right outside the main gym.

WHEN does At Home In Darien operate?

Our office is open Monday through Friday 9am to 4pm.

HOW does At Home In Darien provide all these services for FREE?

All of the programs and services offered are provided at no cost to Darien residents because we are supported by generous donors and receive in kind office space from the Town of Darien. We fundraise to pay for staff, professional drivers, vehicles, gas, newsletters, and all the other items that allow us to provide valuable services to seniors.

AT HOME IN DARIEN COLLABORATE

Darien Commission on Aging

The Darien Commission on Aging is concerned with all aspects of life for Darien seniors and seniors-to-be including health, recreation, transportation and economic needs. Currently there are more than 3000 people 60 or older in Darien – the fastest growing segment of the town’s population.



The Commission strives to increase awareness about what services and programs are currently available to Darien seniors and to notify town officials of additional needs that may exist for our seniors as we look to the future. To accomplish this goal, the Commission actively communicates with other town organizations and agencies which serve our seniors.


The Commission members are appointed by the Board of Selectman following nominations by the Republican and Democratic Town Committees. Each member serves a 3 year term. The current commission members are:


- | | |
|--|--|
| Joe Pankowski Jr (U),
Chairman | Raymond Slavin (R) |
| Arden Anderson-
Broecking (R) | Amy Squyres (R) |
| Jennifer Geddes (R) | Robin Woods (D) |
| Geraldine Genovese (R) | Ex Officio: |
| Ronald Heinbaugh (R) | Olive Hauser, Human
Services Director |
| Mary McCarthy (R) | Beth Paris, Darien Senior
Programs Director |


Commission on Aging meetings are held on the third Wednesday of every month (excluding August) at 9 a.m. in Room 119 of the Town Hall at 2 Renshaw Road. The public is welcome to attend. Meetings can also be viewed at a later scheduled date on Channel 79.


Services for Seniors at Darien Human Services


Darien Human Services, located in room 109 at Town Hall, offers a variety of services and supports to all the residents of Darien. The staff includes Olive Hauser, Director; Inta Adams MSW, Assistant Director; Ali Ramsteck MSW, Case Manager; Elaine Kilbourn, office administrator; Joan Davey, program assistant.


 Specific to seniors, the office can assist with questions about Medicare or health insurance, health concerns, in-home care or assisted living situations.


 The Director serves as the Local Municipal Agent on Aging and is the liaison with resources and programs serving the elderly, including Veterans Services.


 The office has trained CHOICES (CT state health insurance assistance) counselors, who can access the state approved Medigap plans, assist with finding and enrolling in the best Part D prescription plan, and help understand Medicare and Medicaid coverage.


 Many seniors are not aware of the benefits that they are entitled to receive, based on their income. If a senior’s income is less than \$2,413 per month (or \$3,266 for a couple), they can apply for MSP (Medicare Savings Program) and get the Part B deduction of \$104 back in their Social Security check. No assets are considered. For those whose income is below \$2,069 there are additional benefits.


 The Human Services office also takes applications for Energy Assistance program, so that eligible seniors can receive financial aid from state, federal or local fuel banks during the home heating season.


 Seniors with low income may also qualify for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). To supplement this program, the Human Services office also has a household supply closet to provide paper goods, cleaning supplies, personal grooming items, free on a monthly basis. The office is also the referral source for the food pantry at Person-to-Person.

 Eligible seniors who rent in town may also qualify for Renter’s Rebate, based on their rental expenses.

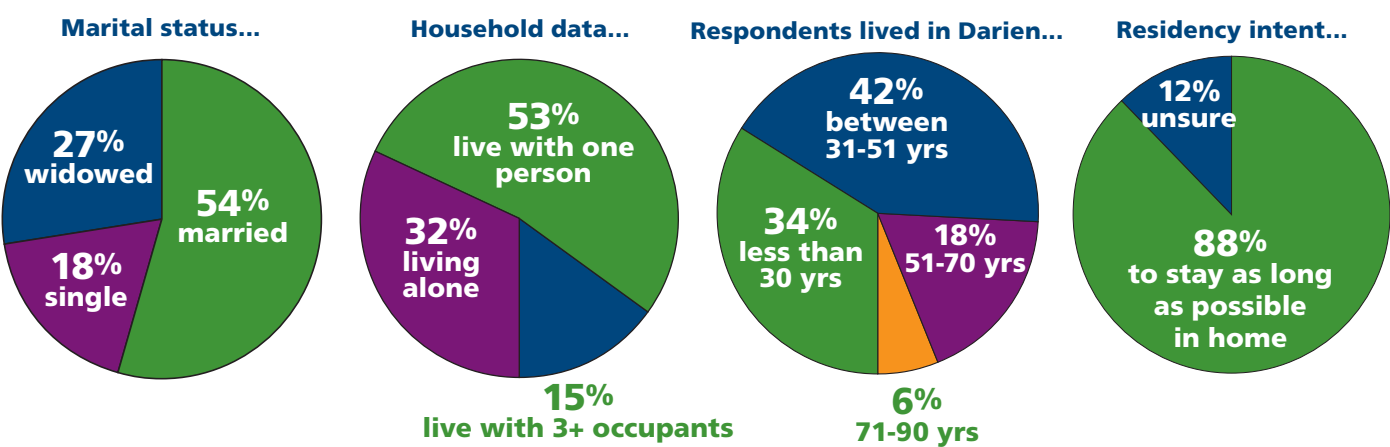
 The office has a Loan Closet that provides free, short term loans of convalescent equipment, such as walkers, canes and wheelchairs.

 If a senior lives alone or is disabled they can sign up to get Reassurance calls during severe weather warnings or town wide incidents.

 All the services provided are described in the Human Services Senior Resource Directory, which has an updated list of all types of resources available to seniors locally, regionally and statewide. In addition, the office maintains a resource library with a variety of other helpful information that is located directly outside their office.

 The staff is available daily to make referrals, answer any questions or to apply for services. On Wednesdays of each week they are available at the Mather Senior Activity Program and will also gladly meet in one’s own home by appointment. For more information you can reach Human Services by phone at **203.656.7328**, by e-mailing, ohauser@darienct.gov or by visiting their website at www.darienhumanservices.gov

Thank you for participating in the At Home In Darien Survey!
In April this year we mailed a senior survey and 297 Darien seniors responded. Respondents ranged in age from 58 to 97 and provided important information and feedback.



Commentary surrounding residency concerns was centered around the lack of suitable sized and priced alternate living spaces, the high income and real estate taxes, and lack of adequate tax relief for seniors.

- 1. When asked about their opinion of the *Out & About* Newsletter, **87%** rated its contents as good, **81%** rated its appearance as good, and **76%** rated its frequency as good. **4%** of respondents don't recall seeing it and **3%** of respondents requested it be sent more frequently.
- 2. In response to a question about the preferred method of receiving the monthly *At Home In Darien* calendar of events, **26%** want to receive it on-line, **65%** by regular postal service and **9%** prefer not to receive it. The June calendar of events was the first issue mailed to all of those respondents who requested it.

- 3. When asked about the involvement with *At Home In Darien*, those who indicated they have used it in the past, currently use or plan to use in the future, ranked transportation first with **176** mentions. This was followed by **152** mentions of vetted service provider recommendations; **120** for volunteer drivers; **108** for event attendance; **105** for advice, counsel or guidance; and **67** for volunteer visitors.

Respondents also reported on volunteering, involvement with other Darien organizations, and other services they would appreciate. The information collected will help us improve the services we offer. Although our survey has been completed, we are always interested in hearing your comments or suggestions. **Call us at 203-655-2227.**

S TO ENHANCE SENIOR SERVICES...

Darien Senior Program at Mather Center

Senior Centers are designated as community focal points through the Older Americans Act. The National Institute of Senior Centers defines a senior center as place where "older adults come together for service and activities that reflect their experience and skills, respond to diverse needs and interest, enhance dignity, support independence, encourage their involvement in and with the center and community."

The professional and experienced staff at the Center includes: Beth Paris, Director and Gerontologist; Marcy Rand, Program Specialist and MSW (Master of Social Work); Chef Tom Mirto, a graduate of the Culinary Institute; and Office Clerk Kathleen Meehan. The staff is enriched by wonderful volunteers.

Darien Senior Programs offers an array of health educational programs, academic lectures, exercise classes, creative pursuits, cognitive enhancing

activities, entertainments and opportunities for socialization - all with the goal to keep strong connection to the community at large. Services offered include blood pressure screenings, caregiver educational support group, ask a lawyer, ask a nurse program, ask a social worker implemented by Darien Human Service Department, and through collaboration with hospitals, home health agencies, and local universities there are additional programs that improve quality of life and living as well as assist Seniors in being well informed and advocates for their own health. In addition lunch is offered daily.

See box below for ongoing classes, and call **203.656.7490** for more information or stop by Mather Center at 2 Renshaw Road, Monday through Friday 9am to 3pm to pick up a brochure, or to take a tour.



EXERCISE PROGRAMS

- Ballet
- Feldenkrais Movement
- Jazzercise
- Low Impact Aerobics
- Pickleball
- Pilates
- Qi Gong
- Senior Fitness (chair class)
- Sittercise
- Stretch and Strengthen
- Tai Chi
- Wii Bowling
- Yoga



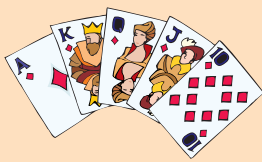
ARTS & CRAFTS

- Painting (Acrylics, Oil, Watercolor)
- Assorted Crafts
- Knitting/Crochet and Needlepoint
- Sketching
- Stained Glass



DISCUSSION GROUPS & CLASSES

- Brain Twisters & Teasers
- Computer Class/Help
- Current Events
- "Let's Talk"/Family Centers
- Health & Wellness Lectures
- Historical Discussions
- Reminisce, Remember & Reflect
- Short Story Discussion
- Writing Class
- AARP Driver Course



GAMES

- Bridge (Beginner, Intermediate, Newplicate)
- Mahjong



LANGUAGES

- Italian Conversation
- Spanish (Beginner, Intermediate)

BECOME AN OFFICIAL MEMBER
OF AT HOME IN DARIEN

NEW MEMBERSHIP CARDS



We are pleased to announce our new membership card program and to provide Darien seniors with a free membership card! In addition to all of the current services we offer, your free membership card will give you access to:

- Discounts and promotions at local businesses and shops in town.
- Priority sign in for special events hosted by **At Home In Darien**.
- **At Home In Darien** contact information at your fingertips!

We will be mailing cards to Darien seniors shortly, if you would like a card be sure to mail in the information below or call our office at **203.655.2227**

Become a FREE Member!

Name_____

Address_____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

Date of Birth _____

- ☐ Please mail me a free membership card
- ☐ Please contact me regarding services
- ☐ Please contact me about volunteer opportunities

Mail to:
At Home In Darien
2 Renshaw Road
Darien, CT 06820
Or Call: 203.655.2227



Assessing the Safety of our Home

Peter Eder, **At Home In Darien** Board member

When we saw the offer from **At Home In Darien** for a free safety assessment of our home by Family & Children’s Agency (a not for profit organization) we decided to take advantage of it. Not that we thought we needed it.

Close to 25 years ago, we bought our current Darien home with the primary purpose of safely housing my ailing 85 year old mother-in-law in a one-level house, with just one step inside the entire structure. It made her comfortable for a number of years and now a generation later, it serves the same purpose for my wife and me.

The process of having the safety evaluation was painless, informational and much more helpful than we had imagined. Our visit was conducted by a Registered Nurse, skilled in exactly this type of visit. After a brief physical check of our blood pressure, heart and lungs, a review of our prescriptions and supplements, we had a conversation about our daily activities in and out of the home.

Then we did a detailed walk through of the house, with a number of simple and practical suggestions. In addition to the obvious “get rid of any throw rugs” and “make sure your smoke alarms and carbon detector are working”, there were a few additional suggestions we were glad to hear. Her advice included adding grab bars in the bathroom and at the inside door sill from the garage, installing stronger lighting in the hallway and rearranging a piece of furniture.

Because of a grant that Family & Children’s Agency has, installation of the fixtures is also free; the only cost is for the hardware.

Simple suggestions made by a professional over the course of a one hour visit was well worth our time. And it could be for you as well.

Home Care Services for Seniors at Family & Children’s Agency (FCA) has partnered with **At Home In Darien**, who provides funding, in order to offer free in-home Fall Safety Prevention evaluations to Darien seniors. For more information about a free in-home Fall Safety Prevention evaluation, where a professional will come to your home and discuss potential hazards and how you can help prevent a fall, please contact **At Home In Darien** at **203.655.2227**.



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

Please call
At Home In Darien
at 203.655.2227
for an application.



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**
2 Renshaw Road, Darien, CT 06820



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 2015 football season. Admission is free to those age 65 and over.

We hope to see you at the games!
2015 DHS Football Captains & Team

Home Game Schedule:
Saturday 10/10 @ 1:30pm vs St Joseph— Homecoming
Saturday 10/24 @ 1:30pm vs Danbury
Saturday 11/7 @ 2:00pm vs Fairfield Warde
Saturday 11/14 @ 1:30pm vs Staples
Thursday 11/26 @ 10:30am “Turkey Bowl” vs New Canaan