

At Home in Darien

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

SPRING 2012

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 1

Greetings from the Executive Director



Dear Friends –

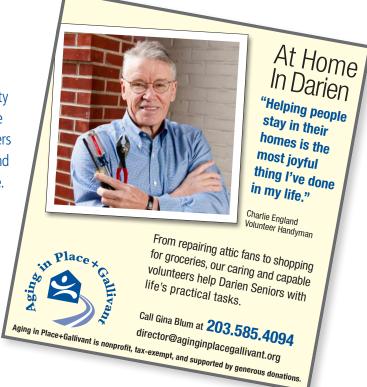
In planning an event on Home Safety for Seniors I recently spoke with one of our trusted vetted service providers about changes one can make around the home to keep one safe at home. Regardless of age, there are things we can do to make our home more

livable. Take a look inside at some ideas for your home, and call us for more information.

Aging in Place+Gallivant (AIP+G) plans all sorts of appealing programs, both social and educational. In order for us to keep you up-to-date on all the wonderful things happening around Darien, please send us your e-mail address so that we may send you our monthly e-mail communication.

Welcome to the newest members of our Board of Directors:
Anne Ardery, Debby McLean, John Schmidt and Maureen
Tyrrell. It is with sincere appreciation that I thank Kaye Barker,
our outgoing Board President, for all the guidance and direction
she has provided in shaping our organization into the great
resource that it has become for Darien seniors, their families,
and their friends.





We are very excited to spread the news about AIP+G and our services. Look for our **At Home in Darien** testimonials in the paper, such as the ones on this page featuring our Board member Charlie England, and our high school volunteer Kelly Kosnik.

Please take advantage of our free services, suggest us as a resource to a friend or loved one, consider helping us by volunteering, and support us with a tax-deductible gift.

We are here for you – give us a call!

All the best,

Gina

Gina Z. Blum, Executive Director, Aging in Place+Gallivant

Can You Give a Hand?

Volunteering is a great way to give back to your community. Help our organization to help others in Darien.

- Consider being a Friendly Shopper or a Friendly Visitor. Go grocery shopping or visit a homebound senior on a weekly
- How about helping with small chores around a senior's house?
- Would you drive and/or accompany a senior to a medical appointment?

There are a variety of ways to volunteer with **Aging in Place+Gallivant** that match your availability and abilities. Whether it's every once in a while, once a month, or every week, we'll find an enjoyable and rewarding experience for you!

Contact Aging in Place+Gallivant at 203-585-4094.

Permit No. 124 Darien, CT

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Aging In Place+Gallivant
P.O. Box 1242
Darien, CT 06820



Aging in Place+Gallivant Receives Grant from the Fairfield County Community Foundation

■ he Fairfield County Community **Foundation** has awarded a \$10,000 grant to Aging in Place+Gallivant. The grant will be used to support the mission of helping Darien senior citizens live independently, comfortably and with dignity in their own homes and the community as long as possible.

Aging in Place+Gallivant is thankful to the Fairfield County Community Foundation for supporting us and investing in the future of the almost 3,000 Darien residents over the age of 60, living at home. Grants such as this help us to strengthen our programs and continue to provide free services.

The Fairfield County Community Foundation promotes the growth of community and regional philanthropy to improve the quality of life throughout Fairfield County. Individuals, families, corporations and organizations can establish charitable funds and contribute to existing funds. The Foundation also provides philanthropic advisory services and develops and leads initiatives to tackle critical community issues.

The Foundation has awarded over \$135 million in grants to nonprofits in Fairfield County and beyond. For more information, visit www.fccfoundation.org.

Stop! Don't Flush!

ost of us have medications that we no longer

take, are old, or have expired. Many of these unwanted medications contain compounds that are known as emerging substances of concern.

We can reduce the amount of these substances in our environment by properly disposing of unwanted medications. Until recently, consumers were told that expired or unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medications from households should be disposed of by flushing them down the toilet or a drain. Although this method of disposal prevents accidental ingestion, it can cause contamination in our aquatic environment. You should never flush unwanted medications down the toilet or down a drain. Fish and other aquatic wildlife are being adversely affected and there is concern that drug-resistant bacteria might develop.

Instead: Safely get rid of those unwanted medications you have in your home.

The Darien Health Department is sponsoring an unwanted, unused **Prescription Drug Disposal Day on** Saturday, April 28th from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm at the Town Dump. Clean out your medicine cabinets!

Financial Spring Cleaning

With Spring comes cleaning and taxes. Have you taken the time to organize your financial life? Staying organized and informed about your finances will help you avoid exploitation, preserve quality of life, and help others help you, should you need it. As you

gather all the necessary documents for your taxes, consider making the following simple steps part of your annual financial check-up.

CREDIT CHECK: You may not think your credit score matters anymore, but checking your credit will tell you if anyone is using your identity without your knowledge. Visit www.annualcreditreport. com, which is the ONLY federally approved website to obtain a credit check or call 1-877-322-8228 to request one by phone or mail.

UPDATE DIRECTIONS: What would happen if you were ill or away from home unexpectedly for more than two weeks? On an annual basis, write down or update any directions about your financial responsibilities. This provides piece of mind for everyone, including you, while you recover or return.

MAKE COPIES: Make multiple copies of these directions or other important documents. Keep them in a safe spot or provide them to more than one person, so you know your wishes are carried out.

TAX PREPARATION: If you are looking for someone to prepare your taxes, consider taking advantage of the free tax preparation and e-filing program administered by the AARP foundation in conjunction with, and under the auspices of, the IRS. In Darien, this program is being held at the **Darien Library** on Fridays from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm through April 13th. It is the nation's largest volunteer-run tax assistance and preparation service and is available to all individual filers regardless of income or age. For an appointment or more information, call 203-669-2602.

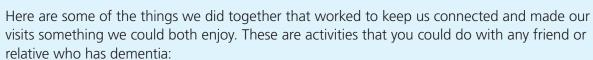
BE EYES AND EARS FOR YOUR PEERS: Should you know of anyone who you worry may be taken advantage of, or who is having financial problems, consult someone. You can talk to someone confidentially about your concerns, such as an **Aging in Place+Gallivant** staff member.

These tips come to you from the Center for Elder Abuse Prevention, a program of The Jewish Home for the Elderly, which is engaged in creating a safer Fairfield County for seniors, not just for financial matters, but also for emotional and physical well-being. Contact their confidential helpline at 203-396-1097 for advice.

10 Things to Do When Visiting a Person with Dementia

By Joan Blumenfeld, MS, LPC

y 88-year-old mother was living at home where I visited with her weekly. She had mid-stage Alzheimer's disease which made our visits something of a challenge. I wanted my time with her to be relaxed and pleasant for both of us. So I learned not to ask questions that she couldn't answer and not to test her memory for recent events, but rather to engage in activities that were manageable and fun.



- 1. Read a chapter out loud from a favorite book
- 2. Watch a movie or TV program together
- 3. Buy a goldfish or a plant to take care of together. (A dozen years later, I still remember the look of sheer delight on Mother's face when she saw the goldfish, that bit of fiery orange life, darting around in its glass bowl!)
- 4. Catch up on what the grandchildren are doing
- **5.** Go out for a meal. Help decipher the menu and place the order. (I had the waiter cut up the food in the kitchen so Mother didn't have to struggle.)
- 6. Talk about old times, their childhood and youth, your childhood and youth
- **7.** Bring photographs of family and friends (Don't test for recognition, name the people in the pictures.)
- 8. Turn on the radio and dance
- 9. Watch a video of their grandchildren
- 10. Just sit and hold hands

Create a list of your own to have in mind when you visit. Keep activities simple and lively. Enjoy the moment together!

Here's a Puzzle from Peter F. Eder. If you would like to share one of yours, please send it to us!



1. NIOIVS

2. LLEHGCANE



5. NIENCAE	

3 MGCHIARN

J. Midelliami	

ANSWER KEY: Delow: PERMANENT VACATION 4. PARAMOUNT 5. CANTEEN 1. VISION 2. CHALLENGE 3. CHARMING

What did the retired beautician earn?

Arrange the circled letters from above answers to form the surprise answer

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Plan for No Regrets

LIVING WILL esearch indicates that an overwhelming majority of adults approve of laws that allow them to be involved in their end-oflife healthcare choices. The Patient Self-Determination Act, passed in 1991, requires healthcare institutions to ask patients about their end-of-life wishes at the time of a hospital admission. Yet, each day in the United States, thousands of critically important end-of-life decisions are being made without the benefit of advanced planning.

So why the disparity between wanting to do it and getting it done?

"Adults may discuss their wishes with family and their physicians, but delay the completion of advance directives," says Christine Pfeffer, RN, Hospice Director at Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County. "This delay can lead to situations in which family members must make guesses about what their loved one would want at the end of life. Sometimes, family members disagree and intense legal battles can ensue," Pfeffer adds.

An advance directive is a legal written document specifying who you wish to make medical decisions for you if you are ever unable to speak for yourself. It can also list what treatments you would want or not want at that time. While each state may have different terminology or requirements, in general, advance directives come in two main forms:

- A "healthcare power of attorney" (or "proxy" or "agent" or "surrogate") documents the person you select to be your voice for your healthcare decisions if you cannot speak for yourself.
- A "living will" documents what kinds of medical treatments you would or would not want at the end of life.

Another barrier to completing advance directives includes a general lack of information available to both health care providers and the general public about how and when to go about completing their advanced directives. **National Healthcare Decisions Day**, which takes place in April each year, was created to address this barrier.

"Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County has participated in the National Healthcare Decisions Day event since its inception," says Pfeffer. "Our agency takes pride in the fact that we are a vital resource for information about advanced planning in Connecticut."

This year, National Healthcare Decisions Day will take place on Monday, April 16, 2012. Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Fairfield County has teamed up with Darien Senior Center to support this national effort and will offer a free presentation at 12:30 pm. For more information or to register, call Darien Senior Center at 203-656-7455.

OUT AND ABOUT -

Aging in Place Ideas for Your Home

ccording to AARP, 90 percent of Americans want to age in their own homes. Unfortunately, about 90 percent of American homes are not designed to facilitate comfortable, secure aging.

Here are six ideas to help your own home facilitate aging, whether for your longterm needs, for a live-in relative or for the safety of your guests.

Make my home visitable.

Stairs create a grand entrance for your home, but aren't so grand for visitors or residents using wheelchairs or walkers. Consider a zero-barrier entry to your home and at least one accessible ground floor bathroom. Not only will this make your home more visitable, it will also assist you should you have future mobility issues.

Make my staircase safer.

A well-secured runner on a staircase is a positive step to making your home safer. It will most likely keep people from slipping on glossy wood treads. Also consider adding stairway lighting with a twoway switch at the top and bottom and a matching handrail along the wall.

Reduce trip hazards in my home.

Table lamps are lovely additions to a room and a great way to add reading light in a study. Just be certain that their cords are not crossing a walkway and creating a trip hazard. Scatter rugs can also present trip hazards, so consider eliminating them if you have vision, balance or mobility issues.

Increase my lever-age.

Levers are much easier for older hands to operate than knobs especially for those suffering from Parkinson's or arthritis. Replace your door knobs, cabinet hardware and faucets with lever-handled versions for greater accessibility and absolutely no loss of style.

Add accessible seating to my kitchen.

Hopping up on a barstool is easy when you're an athletic 20-something. It's not so easy for many seniors. Having tableheight seating makes older users more comfortable and safer. If you're planning to add an island or remodel your kitchen for long-term living, consider accessible seating as part of your plan.

Get rolling.

Roll-out trays, swing-outs, Lazy Susans and other "pull-forward" cabinet accessories are much easier for aging backs and eyes to use. They also greatly enhance the storage capacity of your kitchen by making the deep recesses of your cabinets more accessible.

Excerpted from Houzz Updates



OUT AND ABOUT —



Aging in Place+Gallivant provides the following services to all Darien residents age 60+:

- Transportation within Darien, Stamford, Norwalk and New Canaan.
- Telephone referral, advice and counsel.
- Volunteer services —
 Friendly Visitors, Shoppers,
 Helpers and Drivers along with seasonal services such as snow shoveling and leaf raking.
- Out and About newsletter.
- Monthly email blasts promoting events and services.
- Social and educational programs throughout the town.
- Referrals to discounted vetted service providers such as:

Appliance Repair Computer Services

Electricians

Hairdressers

Handymen

Landscapers

Plumbers

Repairmen

Small Chores

and more!

Call Aging in Place+Gallivant at 203-585-4094 for free information



When you need a ride within Darien, Stamford, Norwalk and New Canaan, call our friendly Gallivant dispatcher, Drivers Unlimited, directly at

203-655-2227

24-hour advance notice and a voluntary contribution are appreciated

Journaling: Telling it like it was, like it is, or as you'd like it to be

Abstracted by Peter F. Eder from web site articles

While journaling's presence can be traced to the beginnings of written history, it is in very recent times that its value as a form of medical and psychological therapy especially for seniors has been discovered.

As a form of thinking therapy, journaling can boost self-esteem and be a cathartic experience. Journaling is not limited to writing chronological stories about our lives, but can describe events and memories as they occur to us. It can also be a safe place to express great joy and let out feelings such as anger, frustration and grief. Perhaps of even greater importance, it can provide a valuable road map for those younger than us to help them anticipate, navigate and react to life's many changes.

Medical studies have also shown that expressing emotions in writing has numerous health benefits.

So, how to get started? Write down your thoughts, your feelings, your memories, your dreams and observations. If you can, record things every day or at least once a week. Journals can be written, keyed on the computer, audio or video taped, depending on your use of various media and the form of communication you enjoy most

Your journals can be private or they can be shared with others – family members, friends or care givers. Here is a list of suggested questions and idea generators, you might consider:

- ✓ What are some of the most important lessons you have learned over the course of your life?
- ✓ What kind of advice might you give about getting and staying married? What's the secret of a long marriage? Or of staying single?
- ✓ What advice do you have about raising children? What mistakes should people avoid?
- Do you have any advice about finding fulfilling work and how to succeed in a career?
- ✓ Many people derive important lessons from difficult or stressful

- experiences. If this applies to you, can you give some examples?
- ✓ Were there turning points in your life — key events or experiences — that changed its course and sent you in a different direction?
- ✓ What are the major values or principles you live by?
- ✓ Have you learned any lessons about how to stay healthy?
- ✓ What advice might you give to others about growing older?
- ✓ What might you have as a wish list for yourself and for other seniors?

Journals can make great gifts: for milestone birthdays, anniversaries, Father's Day, Mother's Day, Grandparents Day, reunion events.

Tips for Saving on Home Energy Costs

10 free and easy things you can do to bring down your home energy costs:

- 1. Open curtains, blinds or shades on south facing windows in cold weather and let the sun warm your rooms. In summer, close window coverings on east and west facing windows to keep rooms cool.
- **2.** Close the fireplace damper when the fireplace is not in use to prevent heated air from escaping up the chimney.
- **3.** Unplug block-type electric chargers, such as phone, computer, and small appliance chargers, from the wall when not in use.
- **4.** Clean the lint filter in your clothes dryer after every load and periodically clean the vent. Lint buildup in the filter can cause the dryer to run longer, wasting energy.
- **5.** Turn ceiling fans on low and set blades to force warm air near the ceiling down in cold weather. Do the reverse in the summer, making the blades turn in the opposite direction so cooled air will be forced down.
- **6.** Clean vents, registers, baseboard heaters, and radiators for maximum heating or cooling output and make sure they aren't blocked by curtains, furniture or carpeting.
- 7. Use heat generating appliances such as clothes dryers and ovens during the coolest time of day.
- **8.** Turn off lights in unoccupied rooms and kitchen and bathroom ventilating fans after they have done their job.
- **9.** Run clothes and dishwashers only when you have a full load.
- **10.** Take showers instead of baths and set the hot water heater at 120 degrees. You'll use less water and reduce winter consumption and heating costs.

Tips courtesy of AARP, 2012

