



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 2013

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 2

Transportation



Dear Friends –

Getting to and from where you want to be is key to maintaining independence for all of us. In order for Seniors to stay in Darien and live in their own homes, reliable

transportation is necessary to retain dignity, quality of life and independence. We strive to provide this practical service and this newsletter is focused on transportation and related issues.

In 2012 **Aging in Place+Gallivant** provided over 2000 door-to-door rides in our handicap-accessible 12-passenger van, complete with a wheelchair lift, and our recently acquired 4-passenger sedan to destinations within Darien, Stamford, New Canaan and Norwalk. Hours of operation were expanded to every weekday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to offer Seniors more options. Rides are free, with a suggested \$5.00 donation and Seniors are transported to and from medical appointments, shopping, or to social events – anywhere they want to go! Additionally, for service to other locations, at times when **Gallivant** is not in service, or when you need a person to pick you up from a medical appointment, we have added volunteer drivers.

We are committed to improving the delivery of transportation to Darien Seniors and the disabled and we look forward to enhancing our program to better meet the needs of our community.

In order to provide transportation services, we need your support. Please look for our Annual Appeal letter in your mailbox. We thank you for helping us make a difference in so many lives and we appreciate your kind support.

We are here for you – give us a call!

All the best,

Gina

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



At Home in Darien

“With Gallivant, I’ve got wheels to get where I need to go.”

Rose Geruso,
Gallivant Rider
with Rick Tymon,
Gallivant Driver

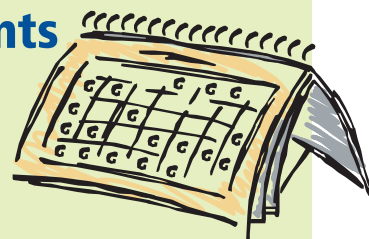
Darien Seniors enjoy door-to-door transportation in our handicap-accessible van or our new passenger sedan. Available weekdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Gallivant serves destinations in Darien, Stamford, New Canaan and Norwalk.

Call Gina Blum at **203.585.4094**
director@aginginplacegallivant.org



Aging in Place+Gallivant is nonprofit, tax-exempt, and supported by generous donations.

Aging in Place+Gallivant Calendar of Events



May 27- Monday

See AIP+G vehicles in the **Memorial Day Parade**

June 16 - Sunday 11:00am to 2:00pm

Darien Collector's Car Show benefitting AIP+G

June 19 - Wednesday at 1:30pm

Movie screening of **“Age of Champions”** and refreshments, cosponsored by **Darien Library**

October 22 - Tuesday

Annual Luncheon cosponsored by the **Darien Community Association**

For more information on these events contact **Aging in Place+Gallivant at 203-585-4094**

Darien Collectors' Car Show

Father's Day
June 16
11:00am to 2:00pm

Father's Day in Darien has become a celebration of families, fathers, interesting cars, and great food in beautiful Tilley Pond Park. The 8th Annual Darien Collectors' Car Show will roll into Darien with vintage cars and modern high performance cars to benefit Aging in Place+Gallivant.

Last year, nearly 2,000 spectators were welcomed to the show where the Best in Show award went to a Silver 250 SWB Ferrari, the People's Choice award went to a spectacular 1911 Packard and Best Original Award went to a 1952 Allard J2X. Special mention went to the “Grace Kelly” Sunbeam Convertible, the Powder Blue 1957 Ford Thunderbird and the Arnolt Bristol Bolide.

Admission: \$5, Free for children under 6

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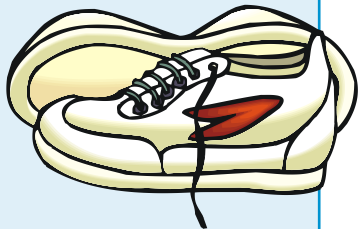
Aging In Place+Gallivant
P.O. Box 1242
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WALKING: The Earliest, Healthiest and Least Expensive Form of Transportation

Peter F. Eder

Walking is not only the earliest form of transportation; it is also the oldest form of exercise. Today, seventy-seven million Americans walk regularly.



Here are some other reasons to walk:

- It will make you feel great and give you power and strength.
- It lowers blood pressure and medical bills.
- It will help you release tension and stress.
- There is no membership fee to walk.
- No instruction manual or equipment assembly required.
- You don't have to keep score.
- You can take in the sights of your neighborhood.

Getting ready:

All you need are comfortable shoes and clothes. Layer loose clothing, keeping in mind that exercise elevates the body's temperature. Shoes specifically designed for walking are best.

Beginners:

Walk short distances. Begin by trying a half mile stroll and increase the duration each time by two to five minutes. Focus on good posture, keeping your head lifted and shoulders relaxed. Swing your arms naturally and breathe deeply, if you can't catch your breath, slow down. In starting, avoid inclines or hills. Look for flat surfaces – a stroll in the mall is a great place to start. A walk at the beach is another good walking site – it comes with fresh air and lovely views, as well as a good dose of Vitamin D on sunny days.

TO DRIVE OR NOT TO DRIVE: That is the Question

Joan Blumenfeld, MS, LPC is a Geriatric Care Manager based in Fairfield County

Driving with my dear old friend Sarah was becoming scary! One evening, Sarah picked me up to go out for dinner. On the way, as she approached a red light and was chatting with me, she stopped paying attention to her driving and bumped right into the rear of the car in front of her. Thankfully no one was hurt and neither car was damaged. The really scary part was that Sarah seemed to have no idea of the danger into which she had put herself, me, and the occupants of the other car.

Her car was developing an increasing number of small scrapes and dents. She was getting lost on her way home on familiar roads that she had been driving for years. The police were called four times in six weeks to locate her.

I never felt safe enough to drive with her again.

Although Sarah had macular degeneration, mild dementia and should not have been driving, she would not hear of voluntarily hanging up her car keys. Being without wheels in a suburban community that lacks public transportation is like being put in

prison. But the police were not happy to keep searching for her and her family was worried about her safety and the safety of others.

Ultimately, in spite of Sarah's understandable resistance, the police along with the cooperation of Sarah's doctors, spouse, and children prevailed. They presented a united front: the police took away her license. Her spouse took her keys and the children arranged among themselves and with a hired driver to get Sarah where she needed to go. Eventually Sarah accepted this arrangement but it was not easy.

Pearl of Wisdom: Cessation of driving is a devastating blow to independence and self-esteem. The Hartford publishes an excellent guide, *At the Crossroads, Family Conversations about Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia & Driving*. Read it online at www.thehartford.com.



AAA Debuts New National Senior Driving Website

AAA Southern New England



By 2020 nearly one in six people will be 65 or older; and most will still be licensed to drive. As 10,000 Americans turn 65 daily, [AAA Southern New England](http://www.aaa.com) and other AAA clubs nationwide are helping aging drivers cope with life-changing transitions with expert advice and easy-to-find resources.

One of the newest resources is a new national website, www.seniordriving.aaa.com, which provides convenient, online access to a wealth of interactive material. There, mature drivers can obtain tools to evaluate their driving ability and improve their skills. Family and friends also will benefit: they'll learn how to recognize signs of concern, and how to have the sometimes challenging conversation with their older driver in a positive and respectful way.

To help senior drivers maintain or refresh their driving skills, AAA Southern New England offers a driving improvement program that reviews the basics of defensive driving and updates drivers on current driving practices. Classes are conducted at the AAA Stamford office on High Ridge Road. Drivers who complete the program may qualify for a discount on their auto insurance. For more information or to register, call **203-937-2595, ext. 4684**.

Give Yourself the Gift of a More Robust and Exciting Life – "Take A Ride!"

Beth Paris, Gerontologist, Darien Senior Activities Center Coordinator

While it might sound like an over exaggeration, it is NOT. One of the most vital tips for healthy aging is finding meaning and joy in life every day. In fact continuing to pursue interests and new learning experiences is one of the key ingredients to successful aging.

As we age our lives continue to change and bring new challenges – we retire, lose close friends and family, and may experience health changes and concerns that alter the way we engage in everyday pursuits. These changes might make one feel like retreating or isolating. But this is the time to keep moving forward and not limit ourselves. Later life can be an exciting time of new adventures if our attitude is flexible and we roll with the challenges and changes.

Being dedicated to adding quality to the quantity of added years is what it is all about. The more we focus on health and wellness of body, mind, and spirit the more able we are to engage in enriching, academic, creative and social interaction, and the better our quality

of life. The key is to not let anything become a barrier to your daily routine.

Often getting from place to place becomes more challenging and is one of the major reasons folks start to self-isolate. If driving at night has become difficult because of visual changes, or going into high traffic areas during the day becomes a bit too daunting, or finding convenient parking is a frustration, you don't have to let that be a barrier to taking advantage of all that goes on in Darien and the surrounding area. Giving up the car keys doesn't mean being stuck at home. Take a ride and enjoy!



Aging in Place+Gallivant at your service.

As America ages, the safety of its older drivers is being increasingly scrutinized. Many states have passed laws aimed at keeping dangerous older drivers off the road. Connecticut is one of only eight states that doesn't require vision testing for those renewing a license. Drivers 65 and older have the option to renew their licenses more frequently – every two years, as opposed to every six, which is required for all drivers. Renewing more frequently isn't a requirement for older drivers.

But the car is not only a means of transportation; it is a symbol of independence for older Americans. Older people shouldn't be forbidden to drive simply because they've reached some arbitrary number of years. Whether they drive should be determined by their capabilities, not by counting birthdays.

For seniors considering their own driving ability, the key is self-awareness. As put by the **National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)** in the guide *Driving Safely While Aging Gracefully*, "People who can accurately assess their fitness to drive can adjust their driving habits. With smart self-management, you can retain the personal mobility that comes with driving, while limiting the risks to yourself and others."

For those who suspect that their older loved one is not driving safely, it may be time to sit down and have a conversation. The NHTSA published a document, *How to Understand and Influence Older Drivers*, to help concerned loved ones approach this delicate topic. When an older driver is not being reasonable or realistic about their driving ability, you can contact the Department of Motor Vehicles to request they directly intervene by filling out an affidavit for review. Forms are available at www.ct.gov/dmv/lib/dmv/p-244.pdf. The DMV tries to help drivers keep their licenses as long as possible. Its responses range from imposing license restrictions – for instance, the driver might be prohibited from driving at night or on



TIPS for talking to older drivers

Communicate openly and respectfully. Nobody wants to be called a dangerous driver, so avoid making generalizations or jumping to conclusions about their skills or abilities behind the wheel.

Avoid an intervention. Keep the discussion between you and the older adult you want to assist. Inviting the whole family to the conversation will alienate and possibly anger the person you're trying to help.

Make privacy a priority. Always ask for permission to speak with a driver's physician, friends or neighbors about the driver's behavior behind the wheel.

Never make assumptions. Focus on the facts available to you, such as a medical condition or medication regimen, that might make driving unsafe.

Identify warning signs of poor driving performance, including if a driver has been issued traffic tickets or warnings, or if the driver has been involved in collisions or "near misses".

certain kinds of roads – to requiring modifications to the driver's car, such as larger mirrors.

Keep in mind that if a driver is involved in an accident or traffic violation and the responding officer believes the motorist shouldn't be driving for some reason, then the driver's license can be taken away immediately. A license may be revoked or modified if a doctor or other professional decides that someone has a medical issue that makes him or her immediately unfit to drive.

Local driving schools can evaluate drivers with visual screenings, physical screenings and road tests. They may recommend the driver stop driving or they may recommend changes that will help them continue to drive safely.

AAA Resource Guide Addresses Seniors' Safety and Comfort

With nearly 90 percent of motorists 65 and older suffering from health issues that affect driving safety, finding a car that adapts to conditions like lack of flexibility or muscle strength and maintains safety and comfort can be difficult.

The AAA resource "**Smart Features for Older Drivers**" identifies vehicle components that optimize older driver safety and comfort, lists current vehicles with those items and allows users to explore their individual needs through an online tool. "Smart Features" addresses a variety of conditions that are commonly experienced with aging, including diminished vision, arthritic joints, hip and leg pain and limited upper-body range of motion.

AARP Driver Safety Course

Drivers age 50 and older can get useful information, and the skills and tools they need to drive today's roads safely.

The AARP course is designed to help you:

- Update driving skills and your knowledge of the rules - and hazards - of the road.
- Learn about normal age-related physical changes and how to adjust your driving to compensate.
- Reduce your chances for traffic violations, accidents and chances for injuries.
- Get an insurance discount. Many auto insurance companies provide a discount to AARP graduates!

Courses are being offered at the **Darien Senior Activities Center** on:

Wednesday July 10th
Wednesday September 4th
Wednesday November 13th
10:00am to 2:00pm

Cost: \$12 AARP members
\$14 Non AARP members

For more information or to sign up, please call the Darien Senior Center at **203-656-7455**. Online classes are available at www.aarp.org/drive/online



Driving and Memory Loss: Steering Through the Process

Mary Underwood, Corporate Director of Memory Care for Maplewood Senior Living

The issue of seniors and driving is often a difficult one to address. And when the diagnosis of dementia is added to the mix, the issue becomes more complicated. When dealing with this, it is important to understand a few key themes:

- People with memory loss often do not self limit their driving. It often takes someone else to make the decision that it is no longer safe for them to drive.
- Connecticut is a non-mandatory reporting state which means that physicians and/or healthcare professionals are not required to report someone whom they feel is not safe to drive.
- Family members often think that getting lost is the biggest concern, however, dementia impacts several areas that affect the ability to drive. These include depth perception; decision making; and judgment.
- People with dementia have difficulty anticipating events (ie: if a ball rolls into the road, a person with dementia may not anticipate that a child will run after).

- Also it becomes more difficult for them to divide their attention (paying attention to the merging traffic while still being able to pay attention to what is ahead).

Although aging and memory loss does impact a person's ability to safely drive, some people are still able to drive well for a time. Deciding when it is time to stop driving is often challenging for families. There are some ways to help with the determination:

- Inspect the car for any unexplained dents or scratches. Also inspect the garage, mailboxes, and other items in the path of the person's driving.
- Go for a ride with your loved one and observe for distance, speed, signaling, changing lanes, confusion at intersections, etc...
- Ask those who may observe the person on regular basis (ie: neighbors; church members; business owners of places frequented).
- Utilize a driving assessment program to determine your loved one's driving ability.

Finally, if the decision is made that your loved one should no longer drive, having the conversation can be overwhelming. It is important not to argue facts but to speak on a more emotional level; emphasizing concern and worry. Also, the person does not need to understand that this is a long term situation, but instead the goal is to get the person to know that for NOW, they are not to drive.



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

- **Transportation within Darien, Stamford, Norwalk and New Canaan, Monday - Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.**
- **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.**

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

Do you “self-police” your driving by avoiding driving situations that put you at greater risk of a crash?

- 80% of senior drivers say they voluntarily avoid one or more high risk driving situations:
- 61% avoid driving in bad weather
 - 50% avoid night driving
 - 42% avert trips in heavy traffic
 - 37% avoid unfamiliar roads

Meet the Gallivant Drivers

Rick Tymon

Rick started driving for Gallivant in October 2004. While driving around Darien and the surrounding towns, Rick truly enjoys making riders smile and laugh. Rick’s favorite hobbies are kayaking, remodeling his home, and spending time with his grandchildren.



Lillie Williams

Lillie began driving for Gallivant in the spring of 2008. She has been professionally driving for almost 35 years. She absolutely loves driving and being with people. When Lillie isn’t driving, she enjoys traveling, reading and cooking. Lillie says her home is affectionately referred to as “Big Mama’s house” because her entire family gathers in her home every Sunday and during holidays. Lillie does all the cooking herself and welcomes in everybody and anyone who wants to come.



Satya Akula

Satya is our newest Gallivant driver as he started driving in September 2012. He takes pleasure in talking with the riders and learning from their life experiences because he feels they are giving him such a unique opportunity to do the best job for them that he can do. When Satya isn’t working, he enjoys taking trips to the casino with his wife, being with his grandchildren, and shopping.



Helpful Information for Gallivant Users

To arrange a ride call the **Dispatcher at 203-655-2227**. Provide the dispatcher with the following information so we can serve your needs:

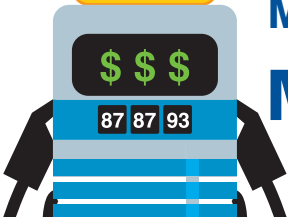
- ✓ **Day and Date you need the ride**
- ✓ **Time of your appointment**
- ✓ **Time you’d like to be picked up**
- ✓ **Exact address you are to be picked up from**
- ✓ **Exact address of your destination**
- ✓ **Whether you need the wheelchair accessible van, if you use a walker, a wheelchair, and if you have an aide or companion accompanying you.**
(If you cannot operate your own wheelchair, or get in and out of your home or the vehicle by yourself, you must have your own companion/caregiver for assistance to accompany you. There is no charge for the companion/caregiver.)



Call 48 hours in advance for Medical Appointments and 24 hours ahead for all other reservations.

If you’d like a Friendly Volunteer to accompany you on your first ride we’d be happy to arrange it, just call us at **203-585-4094**.

GAS



Money, Money, Money...Donations Fuel the Ride

Money may or may not make the world go around, but money definitely makes our van and sedan go around the town of Darien! Transportation expenses alone are budgeted for \$71,850 next year. This includes driver salaries and payroll taxes, their communication devices, dispatch service, maintenance and repairs for the vehicles, and fuel.

Where does this money come from? Although rides are free, this year over \$5,000 came from donations from riders. The rest came from hundreds of generous donors all over Darien.

WE THANK THEM FROM THE BOTTOM OF OUR HEARTS. WE HOPE THAT YOU WILL JOIN THEM to make sure Gallivant continues to go around town providing rides to Darien seniors and the disabled.

Aging in Place+Gallivant is a private, tax-exempt, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization
Please send a generous gift today to Aging in Place+Gallivant
P.O. Box 1242, Darien, CT 06820

Need A Ride?



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

203-655-2227

24-hour advance notice and a voluntary contribution are appreciated
For service to other locations, at times when Gallivant is not in service, or when you need a person to pick you up from a medical appointment, call the **Aging in Place+Gallivant** office for a Friendly Volunteer Driver

203-585-4094