

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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Winter Wise

*“Isn’t it true that a pleasant
house makes winter more poetic,
and doesn’t winter add to the
poetry of a house?”* - Charles Baudelaire

Dear Friends –

Winter is the coldest of the seasons, but if we had no winter, the spring would not be as pleasant! Winter is a time of rest, peace, inner focus, stillness, and reflection. It slows us down and offers us opportunities to refresh ourselves.

Take advantage of being indoors. Read that book you’ve been meaning to get to, catch up on movies or a television series, take on a home project like cleaning out closets, try a new recipe, rekindle a favorite hobby, or reach out to an old friend.

Give us a call if you need any help this winter. We can set up transportation, make a referral to one of our vetted service providers, coordinate a home safety evaluation, or connect you or your loved ones with friendly volunteers who are willing and able to help.

All our volunteers are outstanding, including those that serve on our Board of Directors. At our Annual Meeting in December we welcomed new Board members John Bartlett, Janet Sargent, Tamsin Sickinger and Robin Woods. We also thanked our retiring Board members Charlie England, Karen Goersch, Nancy Herling, Hester Smith, Cathy Sullivan and Amy Squyres for all they have done to help make our organization a valuable resource for the Darien community.

Stay safe and warm, and make the most of this winter!

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

KEEP SAFE AND COZY THIS WINTER WITH VOLUNTEER ASSISTANCE

At Home In Darien is here to help you this winter when it’s too cold or icy to go outside, or if you just feel like staying cozy at home. We offer volunteers who can visit with you, shop for you, or help you with small chores in your home. An enjoyable time could be had with a volunteer visitor by chatting, playing a game or having a cup of tea together. Or a shopper will come and go to the store for you so you don’t have to deal with unpleasant weather. Need a small chore done in your home? We have volunteers who can help! It’s as easy as making a phone call. Call us at **203-655-2227** to arrange for a volunteer at any time.



At Home In Darien
in partnership with Darien Senior Program
at Mather Center

Lunch and Learn

**Conquering Clutter:
Get Organized and
Stay Organized in 2016**



Featuring
Matt Baier
owner of Matt Baier Organizing, LLC

Join us for an enjoyable presentation on all aspects of conquering clutter, including:

- Why it’s harder today
- Strategies for letting go
- Where to begin
- Prevention

**Thursday, March 3, 2016
11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

Mather Center
2 Renshaw Road, Darien

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

RSVP by February 25th
Space is limited, please respond
early to ensure a seat.

 **203.655.2227**

or
Sandi@AtHomeInDarien.org

**Make sure you know
what’s going on
around town...subscribe
to our monthly calendar
of events!**

Email Sandi@AtHomeInDarien.org or



call **203.655.2227** to request to
receive it by mail.





LIBRARY ON THE MOVE

Do you or a loved one miss stopping by the Library? Everyone at the Library misses you too! If you can’t make it by, never fear, they will bring everything you know and love about your town Library directly to you at home.

Being homebound doesn’t mean you should be without your next great read. The Darien Library offers home delivery service of books, movies, magazines, and audiobooks for those who cannot visit the Library in person due to temporary or long-term illness or disability. All it takes is a phone call with one of the Librarians. After a quick chat, they’ll pick out a stack of books that they think you’ll love. Know exactly what you’re looking for? They’ll make sure those items get to you too! All of your items will be delivered right to you and they’ll be picked up when you’re finished.

Of course, a Library isn’t just books and films. Need a will or important document witnessed? Notaries are on-the-go for homebound community members.

Both of these services are completely free of charge. For more information, call **203-655-1234**.



AMERICAN RED CROSS, HOME FIRE PREPAREDNESS CAMPAIGN

The biggest disaster threat in the United States isn’t floods, hurricanes or tornadoes; it’s fires. Seven times a day, someone dies in a home fire in the United States and every 40 minutes, an injury from a fire is reported. For the past 20 years, these numbers have been relatively stagnant. The Red Cross and its partners are seeking to reduce the number of fire deaths and injuries in the US by 25% within five years.

The Red Cross will install FREE smoke alarms where needed and provide information about creating a family disaster plan. Visits to install the smoke alarms can be scheduled for a convenient time and last about 20 minutes.

All services will be performed by the Darien Fire Marshall. To schedule your visit either call **1-877-287-3327** and choose option 1 or register at www.redcross.org/ct/schedule-a-visit.

MOOD BOOSTERS TO COMBAT SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

With the gloom and doom that the winter season can bring, it can be hard to get out of bed in the morning with pep in your step. For seniors in particular, this time of year can be more isolating than other times and can also pose more safety risks with increased accidents and illnesses. Whether you’re just having an off day or you experience some depression at this time of year, here are some helpful mood-enhancing tips that could help turn around any bad day.

Pick one “spoil-me” task to do. When you wake up, give yourself 30 seconds to think of one nice thing you can do for yourself, and do it. Try something good for yourself like going for a walk, a swim at the Y, or a class at Mather Center.



Eat a well-balanced meal. Start your morning with a nutritious mix of complex carbohydrates and proteins that will last you until lunch, such as oatmeal or toast with peanut butter. Research has found that a moderate amount of caffeine elevates mood and mental sharpness, so enjoy some coffee or black tea with your breakfast.

Get some fresh air. Partake in some “green exercise” – physical activity performed in an outdoor setting – even if you only have a few minutes to spare. Researchers found that people experience an enhanced mood and higher self-esteem after just five minutes of various types of green exercise, including walking and gardening. The study also found that exercising near water amplified the effects, so if you live near the shore, a pond, or a river, even better.



Listen to the sounds of nature. Capture the benefits of the great outdoors, even if you can’t get outside, by listening to recorded nature sounds. In a recent study, participants recovered from a stressful situation more quickly when they listened to a recorded combination of running water and bird sounds. Open your window for a bit so you can hear Mother Nature’s music, or invest in an alarm clock that eases you awake with nature sounds.

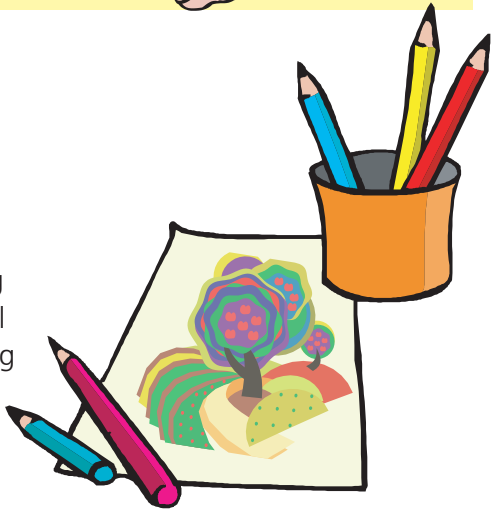
Focus on feeling good. Right after waking up, take five deep breaths and make the decision to feel good for the day. Even when you encounter frustrations and surprises, you will remember to breathe and respond mindfully – rather than react mindlessly – to your circumstances.



Benefits of Coloring and Drawing

Coloring is an activity that we tend to associate with children. As we grow older, we put aside our crayons and colored pencils in favor of more respectable writing utensils. However, it turns out coloring can be beneficial for adults. In fact, lately publishers have been launching coloring books specifically for adults.

At the **At Home In Darien** Annual Luncheon this past fall, attendees found the tables set with colored pencils and pages to color. We recommend you give it a try this winter. The practice generates wellness, quietness and also stimulates brain areas related to motor skills, the senses and creativity.



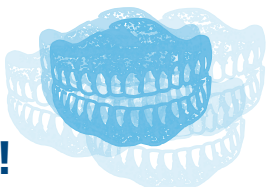
Art can be therapeutic – a fun, relaxing experience for many elders. When participating in these activities, seniors are utilizing both the left and right hemispheres of their brain by using both logic and creativity. Drawing and coloring allows us to forget about chronic diseases or other conditions that are affecting our lives.

The benefits of drawing and coloring are improved coordination, creativity, communication, and it a great de-stresser. It provides a feeling of accomplishment to boot!

Winter Humor



It was so cold...
Grandpa’s teeth were
chattering...in the glass!



A Safe and Healthy Winter

Theresa Santoro, President RVNA – Ridgefield Visiting Nurse Association

Winter weather can be very unpredictable, and many people find themselves unprepared for storms and emergencies. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggest many ways you can prepare your home and car to help keep you stay safe and healthy during these challenging months. Winterize your home with weather stripping, insulation and storm windows. Insulate water lines along exterior walls and keep your roof and gutters in good repair. Have your heating system serviced annually and inspect fireplaces and chimneys. If possible, have an alternative heating source and adequate fuel.

Every home should have smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, and batteries should be replaced annually. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include headache, nausea and disorientation. It is smart to stock nonperishable food that can be used during power outages. Contact RVNA at **203-938-3300** if you would like to be on a list to receive a box of emergency provisions each winter. Ensure that your cell phone is fully charged, and keep a bag of sand, cat litter or ice melt on hand for icy walkways. Have hand and foot warmers in your home, and check on family and friends in your neighborhood who might be at special risk during cold weather emergencies.

Regarding your car, the radiator should be serviced regularly and the car should be equipped with all-weather or snow tires. In the event you become stranded, a car emergency kit is helpful. In it keep a blanket, food and water, booster cables, flares, sand, maps and a flashlight and first aid kit. Remain in your car unless safety is within 100 yards. Move your arms and legs periodically and stay visible by putting a bright cloth on the antenna or turning on the overhead light occasionally. Run the engine and heat only 10 minutes per hour and make sure the tailpipe is not blocked. It is wise to keep a downwind window slightly open.

Being prepared can help you get through the worst of winter and remain safe and healthy.



Friendly Connections— a program of Family Centers

Friendly Connections is an innovative service for the aging and/or homebound population. Friendly Connections offers a variety of outreach services designed to keep people connected, supported and stimulated. Friendly Connections is a great way to continue your education and stay engaged.

Winter is a great time for telephone courses, given the convenience of being home and having the time. Friendly Connections Telephone Courses offer an assortment of educational, social and enrichment opportunities. Courses cover a wide variety of topics designed for the active Boomer interested in continuing their education and for the older adult looking to stay involved.

In addition to telephone based groups, Friendly Connections provides friendly callers and other home services. For more information about the Friendly Connections programs, contact Kelly Johnson, Program Coordinator, at **203-629-2822**.



Fight the Winter Blues with Planning

Beth Paris, Gerontologist - Director Darien Senior Programs

- ✓ When the roads are clear, safe and passable, get out as often as you can.
- ✓ Look ahead at the programs and activities offered in our community and mark your calendar in advance. Remember exercise is one of the greatest mood enhancers – take a couple of classes.
- ✓ Connect with friends at the Senior Center, Library, eateries, and houses of worship.
- ✓ Explore your creative side - art and craft programs can really have a calming effect.
- ✓ Shop for items that you need well in advance of inclement weather to reduce stress. In addition to food and beverages, include activity items i.e. puzzles, art and craft supplies.
- ✓ Visit computer websites for activities to keep your mind busy.
- ✓ In the event that a winter storm keeps you indoors for a few days - make sure to keep in contact with family and friends. You will have plenty to do to pass the time because of your advanced organized planning.

MEMBERSHIP CARDS



**AT HOME
IN DARIEN**
CONNECTING SENIORS TO COMMUNITY

MEMBER
Your Name Here

203.655.2227
AtHomeInDarien.org
2 Renshaw Road
Darien, CT 06820

All Darien seniors (60+) should have received their FREE membership card.

In addition to all the current services we offer, the free membership card gives seniors access to:

- Discounts and promotions at local businesses and shops in town.
A detailed list was included with the card. Updated lists will be posted on our website and sent via email. Please contact us to confirm how you would like to receive updates and additions.
- Priority sign in for special events hosted by **At Home In Darien**.
- **At Home In Darien** contact information at your fingertips!

If you didn’t receive a card, please call our office at 203.655.2227



At Home In Darien
provides the following
services for free
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 & About newsletter.**

**Monthly calendar of events
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
of public sidewalks and leaf
raking.**

**Referrals to discounted vetted
service providers such as:**

**Appliance Repair
Computer Services
Electricians
Handymen
Landscapers
Plumbers
Small Chores
Snow Removal
and more!**

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

TOO MUCH STUFF: HOW TO DECLUTTER

It accumulates. Over the years, a combination of sentimental objects, things we'll use one day, the vestiges of a former life and too many years of tax returns, newspaper clippings, little gifts we never used... the list goes on and the house fills up.

There are obvious reasons to declutter. Safety: clutter can trip us up. Efficiency: with declining eyesight, it gets hard to find things we use every day. Focus: messy environments can make it hard to process information.

But the best reason to declutter - when your house is full of things from your past, things that only remind you of who you were, you very literally have no room for who you are now and who you are becoming.

Why Is It So Hard to Do?

Whether you want to pare down the stuff in your home, garage, or even your computer storage, one problem is knowing where to start. The more we have, the more overwhelming it becomes.

A lot of what we hold on to is loaded with meaning. You might not even like it, but it was a gift from someone you lost touch with, or passed down to you, and you feel guilty about discarding it.



How to Start Decluttering:

- Don't try to tackle too much at once. See what you can get done in a couple of hours and then you can start again tomorrow feeling positive.
- Prepare three bags or boxes, labeling them Keep, Toss, and Sell/Donate.
- Decide what you really use and consider what storage space is available. Be relentless in your decision-making and follow through.

Exercise: Get Ready and Go



Exercise is a great way to stay fit, energetic, and independent. Regular exercise can provide many health benefits including improvements in blood pressure, diabetes, and osteoporosis. Here are a few things to consider when beginning a new exercise routine.

Talk to your doctor

Before starting any exercise routine, you should talk to your doctor for recommendations and ways to stay safe.

Start Small

Start exercising at a low intensity and progress gradually. This will keep you motivated and safe from burn out.

Have a Plan

It is easy to get off track without some guidance. Make a weekly plan. It can be as simple as you'd like but it will help you stay motivated. Do what works for you!

Be Well Balanced

Remember to mix different types of exercise to keep your workouts interesting and improve your overall health. Incorporate cardio, strength, flexibility, and balance exercises for a successful plan.

Water, Water, Water!

Water is key to feeling energized and increasing stamina while exercising. Drink at least 8 glasses a day to stay hydrated.

Grab a Friend

Invite someone to work out with you. This will hold you accountable, keep you motivated, and make the experience more fun.

Anytime is a good time to start a new fitness routine so get up, get ready, and go!