

*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 –

Darien is fortunate to have many resources that assist seniors. Since there is more than one organization that helps seniors, occasionally we hear confusion from Darien residents about what we do and what others do. **At Home**

**In Darien** connects seniors to our community so they can continue to remain in their homes as they age, and easily enjoy all that Darien has to offer. Please see the back of this newsletter for a summary of all the important services we offer at no charge.

**At Home In Darien** is an independent, non-profit organization, which means we have to fundraise to provide the important services we have available for seniors and their loved ones. We collaborate with other organizations to ensure there is no duplication of services. Our goal is to enhance the many senior services that Darien tax dollars provide. Working closely with the Town of Darien, we are very appreciative that the Town provides office space for us, enabling us to be conveniently located for seniors on the second floor of Mather Center.

We collaborate with many wonderful organizations in the community and we are delighted to have you look inside this issue to see all the exciting opportunities offered by one of them—the **Darien Senior Program at Mather Center**. This senior center, supported by Darien tax dollars, offers seniors outstanding programming and is staffed by professional, qualified, and caring individuals and is located in a beautiful, convenient, modern setting. I encourage you to take advantage of all it has to offer! And when you visit it, we hope you will find the time to stop by our offices and say hello.

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

All the best,

Gina  


Gina Z Blum, Executive Director, **At Home In Darien**  
[Gina@AtHomeInDarien.org](mailto:Gina@AtHomeInDarien.org)

Caregiver  
Program  
coming in  
May 2017

In collaboration with the Darien Senior Program at Mather Center and the Alzheimer's Association, **At Home In Darien** will present a special caregiver program that meets 4 weeknight evenings with experts in the field.



Please call 203-655-2227 if you are interested in more information.

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

## Lunch and Learn

### At Home In Darien Services

**Join us** for an enjoyable conversation  
about all the services **At Home In Darien**  
provides for seniors, including:

Transportation

Referrals

Monthly Calendar of Events

Home Safety Evaluations

Volunteer Services

Membership Cards with senior  
discounts and more.

**Friday, April 7, 2017**

**11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.**

Mather Center

2 Renshaw Road, Darien

**Free presentation and lunch  
for Darien Seniors**

**RSVP by March 29th**

**Space is limited, please respond  
early to ensure a seat.**



**203.655.2227**

or

**[Sandi@AtHomeInDarien.org](mailto:Sandi@AtHomeInDarien.org)**

## Congratulations!



**At Home In Darien** driver, Rick Tymon, was recently honored as the 2016 Employee of the Year for a Non-profit Organization by the Darien Chamber of Commerce. Rick is very deserving of this honor as he has been a valuable, responsible and loyal driver for **At Home In Darien** for over 12 years. Rick drives seniors anywhere they need to go – to the doctor, grocery store, hair salon, physical therapy. Rick is helpful, courteous, ALWAYS has a smile on his face, is interested in talking to and getting to know his passengers and takes a genuine interest in their lives. He goes out of his way to make sure his riders are safe, comfortable, and delivers outstanding customer service – always going above and beyond to help our seniors. Rick truly enjoys driving seniors and making them laugh and smile.

**Way to go Rick!**

# Darien Senior Progra

**THE MISSION** of the Darien Senior Program at Mather Center is to nurture the physical, intellectual and social well-being of the senior community aged 55 or better by providing a comprehensive and coordinated system of services that enhance individual lives, promotes well-being, dignity and independence throughout the aging process and keeps members connected and integrated into the community by collaborating with other agencies and organizations who provide support programs and social services to seniors, thereby enhancing the independence and wholesome lifestyle for seniors in Darien.

## The Facts:

**Located at 2 Renshaw Road – adjacent to Darien Town Hall**

**Hours of Operation – Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

**Telephone – 203-656-7490**

**Website – [www.darienct.gov](http://www.darienct.gov) - choose Departments & Services tab, then choose Senior Center**

## Have You Visited?

The Center has two beautiful lobby areas complete with fireplaces and comfy chairs for folks to gather in for conversation, to read magazines, or just to chat. Before or after class they are perfect spots to relax before going on to the day's next event.

The Café is open 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. daily. It is a great place for friends to meet, take a break, and sit and enjoy themselves. Beverages and donuts are available.

Everyone is welcome to stop by the Senior Program at Mather Center for a tour, and to pick up a newsletter to find out about all of the happenings at the center.



## Meet the Staff



Eileen Manhart, Receptionist; Beth Paris, Director; Marcy Rand, Program Specialist; and Tom Mirto, Master Chef.

### Meet...

#### Elizabeth “Beth” Paris

Director Senior Programs, [eparis@darienct.gov](mailto:eparis@darienct.gov)

Beth joined the Town of Darien in 2009. She has been working in the field of aging for over 35 years, specializing in dementia and community-based services. She earned a B.S. in Gerontology and Mental Health from the University of Bridgeport.

Beth's favorite part of her job, hands down, is the people! “Everyone is ageless because age is just a number,” she says. “People's bodies may not work as well as they age, but their soul and heart stay and I love seeing that every day. I marvel at the viability and resiliency of older adults.” Beth's love for the elderly began in 7th grade, when she would spend time visiting and entertaining residents at nursing homes.

### Meet...

#### Marcella “Marcy” Rand,

Program Specialist, [mrاند@darienct.gov](mailto:mrاند@darienct.gov)

Marcy has been working for the Town of Darien since 2011. She graduated from Darien High School and received a B.S. in Psychology from Pine Manor College and an MSW from Columbia University.

While Marcy enjoys all of the programming she does for the Mather Center, she says, “Getting to know the seniors who come to Mather Center, talking and chatting with them, is the best part of my job!”

## Lunch – Delicious and Nutritious



*“Every time you eat is an opportunity to nourish your body.”*

Research shows that as we grow older, eating your main meal at noon is especially beneficial because you have more time to digest and metabolize the meal. Eating lighter fare in the evening aids in a better night's sleep and helps control your weight. Eating at the Center also has the added benefit of socializing with peers and attending some of the wonderful programming offered before and after lunch.

The Café at Mather Center serves lunch promptly at noon Monday through Friday. Each lunch is well balanced, nutritious and tasty and always includes a main course, vegetable sides and dessert – an incredible value at \$4.00 per meal. Leave the cooking to Master Chef Tom Mirto, a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America.

Reservations are required, so give your name by 11:15 a.m. on the day you would like to dine. The answering machine is always on, so feel free to leave a message and a staff member will call you back to confirm your reservation. The menu can be found online and is posted for the following week on Fridays, or you can call to hear the menu. A lighter fare menu may be an option a couple of days per week in the spring.

# m at Mather Center

## Health and Wellness



*“Health is a state of complete harmony of the body, mind and spirit.”*

The Senior Program at Mather Center also assists in maintaining one’s health by offering many educational programs and screening services through local health offices, businesses, and hospitals. This includes Blood Pressure Screenings, Flu Clinics, Cardiovascular Screenings, Fall Prevention Programs, and Health Educational Programs with topics that focus on heart health, hearing, vision, and much more. In addition, there is a caregiving support group that provides the opportunity to learn and share experiences with those in a similar situation. These programs improve quality of life, and also assist seniors in being well informed, and advocates for their own health.

## Classes, Discussion Groups and Games



*“Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning, stays young.” — Henry Ford*

Come to the Senior Program at Mather Center and learn a new skill or brush up on an old one. Spanish and Italian Language Learning, Bridge, Mahjong, Computer, Gardening, Writing, and AARP Driving classes are all available. These offerings are bound to keep you interested and engaged while learning a new skill.

Academic lectures, and various discussion groups are also held and topics include Short Stories, World Affairs, Current Events, Brain Twisters and Teasers, Personal Stories and Life Experiences, and Yesteryear. Listen, interact, and have interesting and lively conversations.

## Exercise



*“Physical Fitness is the basis for all other forms of excellence.” – John F. Kennedy*

When it comes to exercise for seniors, consistency is more important than intensity. Even a moderate amount of exercise, as little as 10 minutes per day, is beneficial as people age. Exercise helps increase mental capacity, balance, movement, quality of life, and life expectancy.

Exercise classes are offered every day. Classes vary by day and include: Pilates, Yoga, Pickleball, Ballet, Tai Chi, Aerobics, Sittercise, Zumba, and so much more. There are so many exercise classes offered, that boredom will not set in...try a different physical activity each day or week. If you prefer one class, then stick with it. The specific activity is not nearly as important as the health benefits you receive from moving your body and staying active.

## Arts and Crafts



*“Art washes from the soul the dust of everyday life.”— Pablo Picasso*

Being an artist is easy at the Senior Program at Mather Center. It’s simple to explore your inner artist with many different and creative art classes offered such as: Crafts, Stained Glass, Knitting and Painting - Oil, Watercolor, and Acrylic. There is also a Woodshop program.

The arts have a positive effect on health and illness as we age. There are a wide range of benefits including: helping individuals relax; providing a sense of control; reducing depression and anxiety; assisting in socialization; encouraging playfulness and a sense of humor; increasing self-esteem; nurturing spirituality; and reducing boredom.

## Entertainment

*“Part of the experience of being entertained is sitting back and plugging into someone else’s vision.” - Penn Jillette*

Audiences at the Senior Program at Mather Center experience sheer pleasure and delight by an enormous array of entertainment programs. These events bring holidays alive and make any regular day of the week a special event. The variety of entertainment is remarkable, the quality is outstanding, and the performances are always a cause for celebration.

Entertainment programs are frequently held at the center throughout the year. These include swing bands, youth groups, choral singers, pianists, dancers, and so much more. A good time is had by all!





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

Monthly calendar of events.

Membership Cards that give  
seniors discounts with local  
businesses.

Home safety evaluations.

Social and educational programs.



Handy Services —

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

Referrals to discounted  
vetted health and home care  
professionals, and property and  
home maintenance services.

## Darien Steppers



Attention all walkers...**At Home In Darien**  
has coordinated a walking group for seniors.  
The group meets weekly at 9:30 a.m. on  
Thursdays (at Tilley Pond) and Fridays (at  
Waveny Park). All seniors are welcome to  
walk on any day, any week.

Darien Resident and Darien Steppers Coordinator  
Jane Matthews encourages walkers, saying  
“Walk with us, it’s easy and stress free – make  
new friends and enjoy the weather.”

The American Heart Association confirms that  
regular 30-minute brisk walks have unlimited  
health benefits. Walking with others keeps  
you motivated, helps you keep an ongoing  
commitment to walking, and is a great social  
activity and way to meet new people.

If you are interested in joining the walking  
group, please call the **At Home In Darien**  
office at **203-655-2227** or email  
sandi@athomeindarien.org.



## Volunteer Caller Program

**At Home In Darien** is launching a new  
volunteer program to assist seniors in our  
community. Volunteers will make weekly  
phone calls to offer a friendly hello and  
to chat, and to also help connect seniors  
to our community, services, events, and  
information. This program offers many  
benefits such as an added sense of security  
and connection, enjoyable conversation  
and laughter, and the opportunity to  
build a long lasting friendship.

If you are interested in having a friendly caller or becoming one, please contact **At Home In Darien** by phone at **203-655-2227** or by email at sandi@athomeindarien.org.

## At Home In Darien has a new website!

**At Home In Darien**  
has updated its website.  
The site makes accessing  
our services and finding  
out about new ones  
significantly easier. It also  
has a cleaner and fresher  
look and is considerably  
more user friendly and  
easier to navigate. An  
archive of newsletters  
and annual reports are  
just a click away for those  
who would like to read  
about the past work of  
**At Home In Darien**.  
The website includes  
new features where one can learn about the history of the organization, current activities, upcoming events, or make an online donation. Check it out at [www.athomeindarien.org](http://www.athomeindarien.org).  
Let us know what you think!



## Thank you!

**We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all the volunteers who participated in our leaf raking program this fall** – the St Thomas More Youth Group of Darien, Boy Scout Troop 35, Darien YMCA Adventure Guides and Princesses. Lucy Ackemann and family, Matthew and Rebecca King, Rohan Kandi, Luke O'Neill and family, Skye and Tighe Ekern, Nina Miller, Ellen Powis and Deborah Evans. They spent over 400 combined hours raking, bagging, and hauling leaves from 22 homes of appreciative Darien seniors.

**A special thank you to those who “retired” from our Board of Directors at the end of 2016** – Carolyn Anderson, Holly Hawes, Wyn Lydecker, Patrice Malvisi and Frank Rosenberry.

**We welcome our new Board members** – Susan Bhirud, Pamela Payne and Pat van den Broeck.

## Thanks for your Support!

**At Home In Darien** is supported by hundreds of people from all over the town. 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

**Remember us in your will or trust!**