

Dear Friends—

Our 10th anniversary year has successfully come to a close, but we're delighted to continue celebrating this year with the Town of Darien's 200th Anniversary. In collaboration with the Darien 2020 Bicentennial Committee, we are proud to bring you an enjoyable story of Darien as well provide you with the Bicentennial's exciting calendar of events (see inside).

At Home In Darien is beginning its second decade of service to our community. We are steered by a dedicated and talented Board of Directors who work with me to ensure that **At Home In Darien** continues to provide services and resources that enable seniors to remain in their own homes. We welcome new members—**Bob Baylis, Mark Bergen, Monica Billeter, Diane Schlinkert, and Peter Sosnow**. We appreciate their willingness to serve on our Board and to help

At Home In Darien continue to thrive. We are also grateful to our outgoing board members—**Peggy Brown, Annie Burleigh, Olive Hauser, Lisa Hughes and Pat van den Broek**, for all they have done to help us fulfill our mission and to make our organization a valuable resource for the Darien community.

As always, we are here to help you! Give us a call at 203.655.2227

All the best,



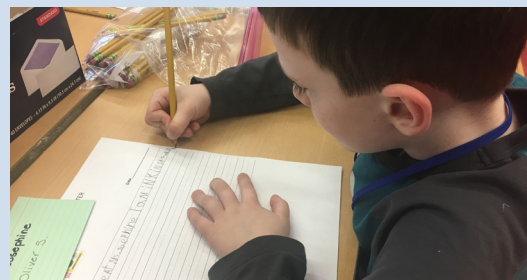
Gina Z. Blum
Executive Director of
At Home In Darien

Gina@AtHomeInDarien.org

Like us on Facebook 



WILL YOU BE A PEN PAL?



At Home In Darien has joined forces with the Kids Care Club at Tokeneke Elementary School for an intergenerational pen pal program. We are looking for Darien seniors who are interested in being a pen pal. Students will reach out to the seniors with the first letter and the seniors get to write back! We hope the pen pals will continue to correspond throughout the school year. Even today, handwritten letters have a way of putting a smile on someone's face. A pen pal program is a great way to connect people and is mutually beneficial to both participants. All pen pals will benefit with a new friend and a new outlook on life! If you would like to participate, please contact **At Home In Darien**.

our mission:

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

2020 Board of Directors

Susan Bhirud, President
Amy Harned, Vice President
John Hess, Vice President
Tamsin Sickinger, Vice President
Alison Wright, Secretary
James Metzger, Treasurer

Bill Ball	Peter Carnes
Diane Barston	Amy Harned
John Bartlett	John Keating
Bob Baylis	Anne McGuire
Mark Bergen	Peter Sosnow
Monica Billeter	Robin Woods



Elisabeth Marrocolla, Ex officio
Beth Paris, Ex officio
Ali Ramsteck, Ex officio
Gina Z. Blum, Executive Director



Newly elected **At Home In Darien** Board members **Bob Baylis, Monica Billeter, Mark Bergen, Diane Schlinkert and Peter Sosnow**.



MEMBER

Your Name Here

203.655.2227
AtHomeInDarien.org
2 Renshaw Road
Darien, CT 06820

Stay Active and Engaged

Your free **At Home In Darien** membership card makes it very easy to get out and take advantage of discounts at local restaurants, shops, and services in town. Whether it's an afternoon shopping, or a meal out, bring your membership card with you to receive special promotions. Check out our website to see a complete list of participating businesses or call us at **203.655.2227**.

If you are 60 or over and have not received your free membership card, please contact us to receive it.

TAXI ANYONE?

At Home In Darien transportation services are safe and trustworthy, but are available only on weekdays. Our Half-Price Taxi Voucher Program allows you to arrange transportation for yourself on-demand, around the clock, 365 days a year! Taxi rides are 50% off the regular price for Darien seniors 60+ and residents with disabilities. For example, a booklet of taxi vouchers worth \$25 is available for purchase for only \$12.50. Simply pay the taxi driver with your vouchers.

More than 50 Darien residents currently take advantage of this program!

To purchase vouchers, residents must bring proof of age or disability. Please call **At Home In Darien** at 203.655.2227, or stop by the office at 2 Renshaw Road, for more information.

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IN DARIEN**
CONNECTING SENIORS TO COMMUNITY
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Darien, CT 06820



To participate, volunteer or donate visit
www.darienct.gov/2020 or email
info.darien2020@gmail.com

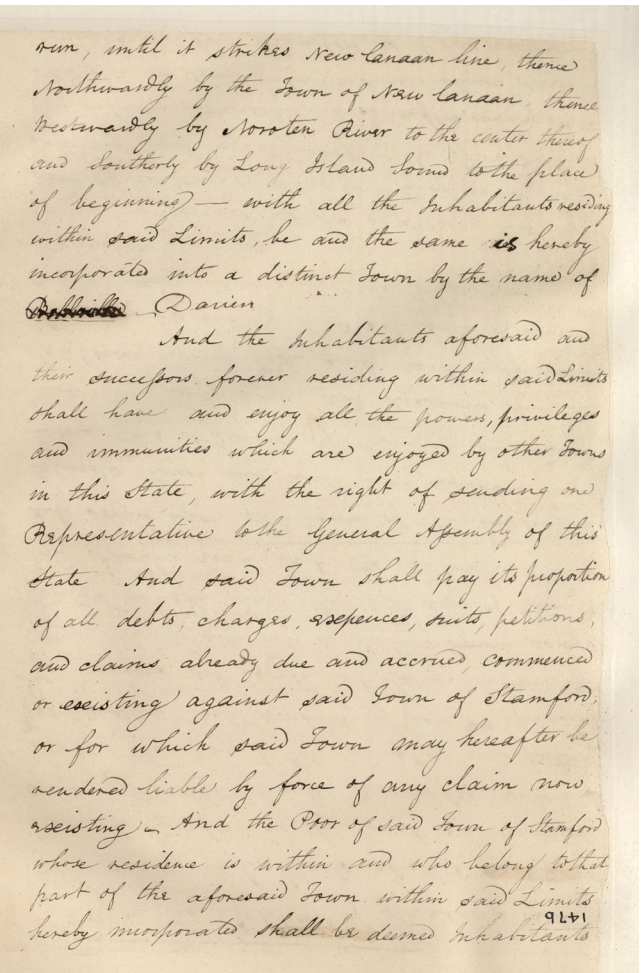
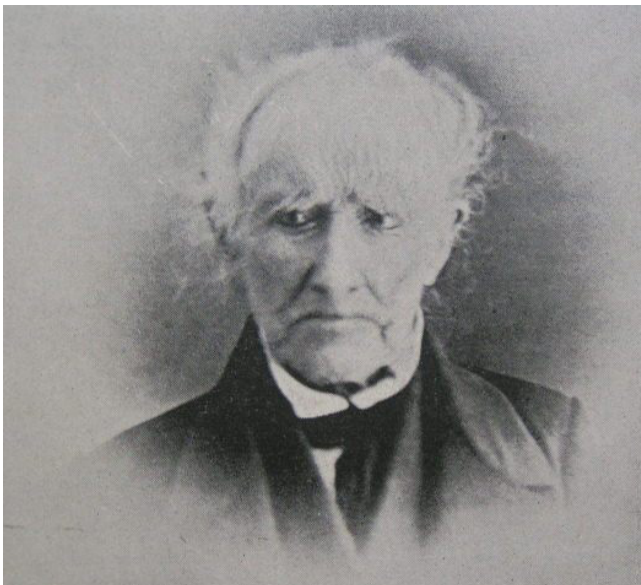


Photo credit "From the archives of The Darien Historical Society"

Happy Birthday, Darien!

In 2020, the town of Darien will celebrate the 200th anniversary of its founding. Be sure to mark your calendars for these special events celebrating the town's birthday.

Bicentennial Opening Ceremony
Friday, January 10 at 7pm—Town Hall Auditorium

Weed Beach Fest's Bicentennial Bash
Saturday, June 6—Weed Beach

Anniversary Day Ceremony
Friday, June 12—Slawson Cemetery, Hanson Road

Heritage Day Celebration & Reenactment
Saturday, October 24—Darien Historical Society & Mather Homestead
FEATURING: The Fifth Connecticut Regiment

All events are open to the public.

COMING SOON: The Darien Heritage Trail
Historical sites around Darien will soon be linked by interpretive markers.

A New Town, A New Name

From *The Story of Darien, Connecticut* by Darien Historical Society Historian Ken Reiss

After the Revolutionary War, the four big Colonial Towns of coastal Fairfield County—Stamford, Norwalk, Fairfield and Stratfordall came under pressure to grant independence to the outlying communities within their borders that had grown populous enough to manage their own affairs. By the mid-1800s, those four towns had given birth to nine additional towns. One of them was Darien.

Middlesex Parish had taken its first steps toward autonomy in the 1730s when it petitioned to become a separate parish, a step which at that time gave it authority over taxation and schools as well as ecclesiastical matters. From then until full independence, Middlesex was mostly in Stamford, but it did also include a sizeable slice of Norwalk.

Beginning in 1804, the citizens of Middlesex – including those living in Norwalk—began to petition the General Assembly for incorporation as a town. Under the energetic leadership of Assemblyman Thaddeus Bell, Middlesex had every

reason to expect success. Indeed, Canaan Parish had successfully petitioned to incorporate as New Canaan in 1801, and Wilton had followed suit in 1802. There was the rub: when Norwalk lost the battle to keep Wilton, it lost a large percentage of its territory and of its tax base. Norwalk was determined to prevent further "mutilation." In 1804 and again in 1806, Norwalk succeeded in blocking Thaddeus Bell's petitions to the assembly on behalf of Middlesex. In his next petition, in 1820, Bell included a compromise: Middlesex would give up the Norwalk territory and settle its eastern boundary at the Five Mile River. This time it passed.

Middlesex—or most of it—was independent at last! Like most of the parishes that converted to towns, Middlesex opted for a new name. But what was that name to be?

Names from old England and names from the natives were both out of fashion. Many new towns around the country were adopting the names of classical empire, names like Rome, Troy, Athens, Syracuse, Memphis and Cairo. There was a scattering of

Moscows, Berlins and Parises, and even a Warsaw or two. Naming a town after political greats was popular. Nearby, new towns had recently taken Trumbull and Huntington for their names; Middlesex was probably Federalist enough to pass up choices like Madison and Monroe, which were still available.

But what could be more appropriate than for Middlesex to honor the father of its independence. Thaddeus Bell? "Bellville" it would be, making use of the French "ville" suffix that was all the rage. And Bellville it was, briefly, until Thaddeus himself crossed out the name on the town's charter and substituted the word "Darien."

"Darien" was the traditional name for the isthmus of Panama. How the name ended up here has never been authoritatively determined. One version suggests that the name was chosen because this town connects Stamford with Norwalk, as Darien in Central America connects the continents of North and South America. A tamer version of this theory simply makes "Darien" a more exotic name for the town-in-the-middle, Middlesex.

Look for the latest theory on the origin of the town's name in Ken's newest book to commemorate the town's Bicentennial: *Darien, 1820—New Town...New Times*, coming in March of 2020.

Service Name Change!

We've changed the name of one of our valuable services—**Vetted Service Provider** is now... **Trusted Service Providers**. It's the same great service with a new name.

Have you ever needed a plumber, electrician, handyman (fill in the blank) for any home service, but not known where to turn for a good and trustworthy recommendation? If you don't have a personal referral, the idea of opening the yellow pages or looking online seems too unreliable.

Look no further! **At Home In Darien** maintains a list of qualified professional home service and repair providers who meet our strict insurance, licensure, and performance requirements. We will refer you or your loved one to vetted professionals for property and home maintenance services, providing you with reliable references and peace of mind.

These professionals are vetted and carefully screened. We review their applications and we check references. We make sure that all businesses have the necessary licenses and certificates required by the State of Connecticut. In addition, we monitor these licenses and certificates to ensure they are current and valid. We review the insurance policies to make sure these businesses maintain an appropriate amount of insurance.

And we also make sure they have a good record with the Better Business Bureau. We even conduct a personal interview - we look every provider in the eyes, we talk to them face to face, and we shake their hands.

We do the legwork so that you can be sure that the professionals on our list are trustworthy and qualified. Many lists are simply advertisements where companies pay for having their names listed. Not the case with us—we don't make any profit from the referral.



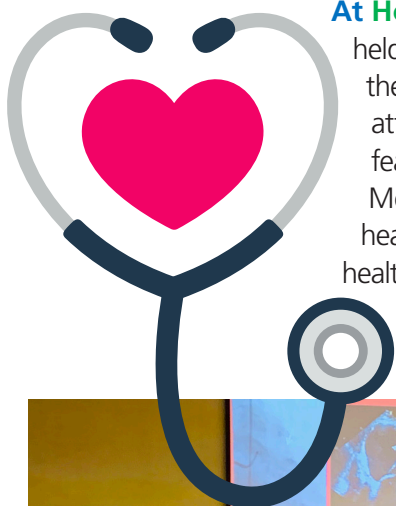
There are listings for a wide variety of services from computer assistance in your home to home safety improvements; from a good painter to a good in-home hairstylist; from help with bill-paying to help with yardwork. Services are offered at reasonable rates and often the professional will give a discount to **At Home In Darien** members (and all Darien seniors 60+ are members of **At Home In Darien** at no cost!).

Please call us at 203.655.2227 or stop by our office at 2 Renshaw Road for a referral. We've been

asked why we don't publish our list. The answer is simple – we follow up with every member to make sure the job was done well. We rely on member feedback to make sure they are completely satisfied with the work. If our members aren't happy, we're not happy, and we will no longer refer that business to others.

We need your help to grow our list. Our best recommendations come from our members, our friends, our neighbors. Please share your suggestions of great service providers and we'll add them to our list. Thank you!

Heart Health



At Home In Darien's Annual Luncheon was held on October 22, 2019 in conjunction with the Darien Community Association and was attended by 130 Darien seniors. The luncheon featured speaker Dr. Mina Owlia of Stamford Medical Group who addressed the issue of heart disease and offered tips on adopting healthy lifestyle habits and improving the quality of one's life. This event was generously sponsored by Maplewood of Darien.



Making Darien a Dementia Friendly Community



During the past year, **At Home In Darien** has held several Dementia Friend sessions that have been very well received. A Dementia Friend is someone who has learned more about dementia, and has seen how putting yourself in the shoes of someone living with the condition can change your opinion of the disease.

Gestures, such as spreading the word about Dementia Friends, or visiting someone living with the illness, can help in a small way and make our community Dementia Friendly. Anyone can be a Dementia Friend! If you are interested in attending an hour long session, or arranging a group session, please call us. Our goal is to train every adult in Darien to be a Dementia Friend.



Dementia Friends session at the Darien Library on November 18, 2019.

TO WHOM I MAY CONCERN

At Home In Darien was delighted to bring this powerful interactive theater program to the community on November 7, 2019. The program was performed by people diagnosed with a progressive brain illness such as Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. In their own words, these individuals shared their stories and experiences before our audience at the Mather Center, Home of Darien Senior Programs. The goal of the performers is to reduce the stigma associated with Dementia. The program was generously sponsored by The Residence at Selleck's Woods.





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.

Half-Price Taxi Voucher Program



Telephone referral, advice and
counsel.



Communication and Programs —
Out & About newsletter.

Monthly calendar of events.

Membership Cards that provide
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
property and home maintenance
services.

ANNUAL MEETING

The **At Home In Darien** Annual Meeting was held at the Darien Library on December 3, 2019 and was attended by more than 50 people. The meeting featured a special panel discussion with individuals affiliated with **At Home In Darien**. The panelists shared their perspectives on the organization and its mission of keeping seniors connected to the community.



Panelists: driver Ken Coppola, staff member Jennifer Rideout, Board member Peter Carnes, Darien senior Marian Castell, and volunteer Nina Miller.

Free In-Home Safety Evaluations



At Home In Darien offers free in-home Fall Safety Prevention Evaluations to Darien seniors through a partnership with Family & Children's Agency (FCA). A registered nurse or a specially trained caregiver will come to your home and discuss potential hazards and how you can help prevent a fall.

The FCA caregiver can also refer you to other services to ensure you may remain safe and independent in your own home.

Call **At Home In Darien**, **203.655.2227** for more information and to schedule your free in-home Fall Safety Prevention evaluation.

Thank you!



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

Don't forget to remember us in your will or trust!

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

Call **203.655.2227** to request to receive it by mail. If we have your email address you will also receive our BLOG notifications where we share important information on various subjects of interest.



We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to St. Thomas More Youth Group of Darien, Church of Latter Day Saints Youth Darien Ward, Darien YMCA Adventure Guides and Princesses, the St. Luke's of Darien's Confirmants, Darien 8th Grade Football Team, the Hopper Family, the Wheeler Family, the Ventker Family and the Vicente Family, for spending over 450 combined hours raking, bagging and hauling numerous piles of leaves from the homes of 25 Darien seniors.