



OUT & ABOUT

2 Renshaw Road • Darien, CT 06820 • 203.655.2227 • www.AtHomeInDarien.org



Dear Friends,

At the beginning of the year, no one could have anticipated that we would be living through such unusual circumstances. The need to lend a hand has never been more important.

At Home In Darien is a vital resource for our town's seniors and welcomes the opportunity to help anyone in need. We have continued to provide crucial services throughout these demanding times — essential transportation, grocery shopping, pickup and delivery of prescriptions, telephone contact, advice, referrals, and customized assistance as needed. Rest assured, we take every precaution to keep our staff and the community as safe as possible while providing these important services.

As we learn to live with COVID-19, we have come to terms with a new normal. We have adopted new practices, including wearing masks, physical distancing, and frequent handwashing that will help keep everyone safe and help prevent the spread of the virus.

Currently, large gatherings are restricted which greatly hinders our ability to socialize and stay connected. Events around town, including our annual luncheon, are on hold. We know this can be challenging as it leaves us all feeling isolated and less connected to the community. Please give us a call. We can offer updates on local happenings and help with a variety of concerns — transportation, advice and referral to resources, volunteer services, referrals you can trust for home repair projects, and membership cards that provide discounts at local businesses. We are available to help with any questions, and are also free for a simple chat. We welcome the opportunity to connect with you.

This issue of our newsletter includes profiles of individuals who are connected to us, even during the pandemic. Their interesting stories show a community network — people who use our services, support us, work for us, serve as board members, and volunteer. We hope you will find it enjoyable and just a small glimpse of the many ways we can be of help.

Please remain healthy and safe.

We are here to help you, just give us a call **203.655.2227**

All the best,

Gina Z. Blum

Executive Director of **At Home In Darien**

Gina@AtHomeInDarien.org

Like us on Facebook



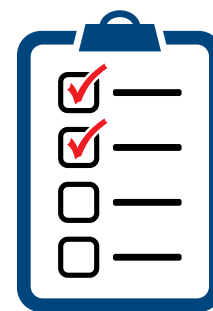
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Free In-Home Safety Evaluations



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.

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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Need help with leaf raking this fall or shoveling snow from your public sidewalk this winter?

Please call
At Home In Darien
at **203.655.2227**
for an application.





Jane has lived in Darien for the past 8 years after moving here to help care for her granddaughters. Although she planned to stay for just a year, she still lives in Darien, because she's such a fan! Previously from the Princeton, New Jersey area, Jane was Director of Sales and Marketing for a residential real estate company. She is a first-generation Irish-American and the oldest of 7 children.

Jane learned about **At Home In Darien** through her volunteer work at the Darien Community Association Thrift Shop. She began volunteering as a driver with **At Home In Darien**, because once she got to her late 60s, "I realized I had the time to give back to the community and do what I think is important." Jane also became the volunteer coordinator for

At Home In Darien's walking club, the Darien Steppers, and continues to lead walks several times per week.

When **At Home In Darien** needed to hire another driver because ride requests were increasing, Jane was a natural choice. Jane says that her work is important not only to riders, but is also important to their family members.

At Home In Darien makes it easier for adult children to take care of their aging parents. Jane enjoys providing a reliable and safe transportation experience that people depend on, whether it be a trip to the doctor, shopping mall, or grocery store. Jane's favorite aspect of being a driver is listening to people's life stories. According to Jane, "Drivers are like a neutral sounding board. Riders will often tell me more about their life than they would their own children!"

Jane praised the safety procedures that were put in place due to COVID-19 to keep riders both safe and comfortable. Disinfectant, hand sanitizer, and a full car wipe down have become a regular part of the transportation routine. Temperatures are checked and masks are worn on every ride. "**At Home In Darien** has gone above and beyond to ensure everyone's safety."

Outside of work, Jane loves gardening and even has a plot at the community gardening center. She is also very involved in her grandchildren's lives who are 8 and 9.



Ines has lived in Darien for 42 years, but is getting ready to move to Long Island to be closer to family. After her husband was no longer able to drive, Ines needed reliable transportation. "**At Home In Darien** has been a lifesaver" taking her to the doctor and grocery store in a safe and comfortable vehicle. Ines says that **At Home In Darien** has helped her and her sister maintain an independent lifestyle. Ines remarked that taking a taxi every time she wanted to go somewhere was too inconvenient and much too expensive.

Ines spoke of her wonderful relationship with Jane, **At Home In Darien's** driver. "Jane is an angel" and "a great, great help for my sister and me." Among many conversations during rides, Ines and Jane learned that they share a love of gardening.

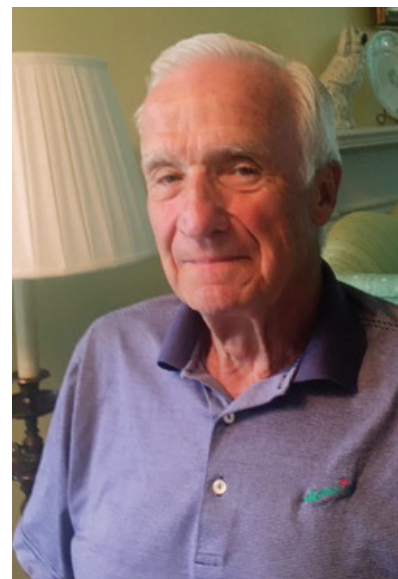
Ines has also depended on rides from **At Home In Darien** during the COVID-19 pandemic. She feels very safe knowing that the cars are clean and that the organization takes the appropriate safety precautions.

"**At Home In Darien** is a great service, something we will miss very much when we move." Ines emphasized that there is nothing quite like **At Home In Darien** and residents are very fortunate to have access to the services.

Jeff grew up in Rochester, New York and came to Darien in 1969. He and his wife love Darien and their three children were born and raised here. Jeff retired 8 years ago and since then has been a volunteer teacher, mentor, and a pro bono consultant for small businesses. He enjoys spending time with his friends and family and playing golf.

Jeff found out about **At Home In Darien** through a friend of his wife's who was involved as a volunteer. He certainly did not foresee himself needing the services in the immediate future. Unfortunately he slipped on black ice and ruptured his patella tendon on Christmas Eve 2019. After being told by his doctor that he couldn't drive for 4 months, he thought he was going to go crazy. However, he soon realized he could use **At Home In Darien** for rides. During those months, the ride service gave him the freedom to keep active and enjoy Darien.

Jeff had "fantastic experiences with the drivers" and described the service as a "lifesaver." Jeff has recovered from his injury and is now back on the golf course. Jeff is grateful for the help he received during his recuperation.



Peter has been a Darien resident for almost 20 years. He and his wife love Darien and think it is the ideal place for the two of them to raise their three sons. Darien offers many benefits for families to live a happy and healthy life.

After spending 25 years in the healthcare industry working out-of-state, Peter went into local real estate, which gave him more free time to enjoy Darien. Peter's new career as a residential multifamily real estate investor allows him to offer high quality and affordable homes to essential workers.

Three years ago, Peter started volunteering with **At Home In Darien** and quickly realized the importance of the organization in keeping Darien seniors connected to the community. He commented that although the services are for seniors, volunteers benefit as well. As a new Board member, Peter hopes to learn more about the various programs and services which make **At Home In Darien** special. Peter's enthusiasm for the organization stems from both personal and business experiences. His grandmother was a home health aide on Long Island and he often joined her when she visited seniors in her community. He has also seen first-hand how people prefer to stay in their own homes and communities as they age.

Peter hopes to serve as a Board Member with **At Home In Darien** for a long time!

John has been in Darien for 42 years. He was born in Memphis, Tennessee, and lived in Stratford, Cos Cob, and Washington DC, before settling in town. He is an honored veteran of WWII, with over 30 years of creditable military service with the US Navy, and nearly 30,000 hours of logged flight time. He frequently flew up and down the North Carolina Coast and down to Florida. He enjoyed the freedom associated with flying because he could take his plane anywhere.

When John was no longer able to drive and no longer had the freedom to travel wherever he wanted, he was lost until he found **At Home In Darien**. John says that **At Home In Darien** is a great service that gave him his freedom back. He likes the drivers and finds the vehicles to be comfortable, safe, and well maintained. Because of **At Home In Darien**, John is able to continue living his life at 96 years old and is the same adventurous and free spirit he once was!



Michele has called Darien home since 2008. Originally from Oakdale, Long Island, she lived in Brooklyn for 11 years after graduating from college, and then Stamford before settling in Darien. She worked as a data analyst for 2 years, and in asset-management for 10 years. After having children, she became a stay-at-home mom and active volunteer. Michele served on the Boards of the Junior League of Stamford-Norwalk and the Hindley School Parent Teacher Organization. She enjoys spending time with her family, which includes her husband and her two daughters aged 11 and 13.

Michele first heard about **At Home In Darien** from *Out & About* and started working in the office this March just before we all had to quarantine. She wanted to work for a non-profit organization and give back to the community. Michele found

At Home In Darien to be the perfect fit! Michele's favorite aspect of the job is interacting with seniors. She also enjoys connecting volunteers with seniors, as she sees the benefits to both parties.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, Michele was amazed with the number of people who offered to volunteer. Many people were still willing to tackle tasks such as shopping (in a safe manner) for at-risk populations.

When not working, Michele enjoys walking, reading, traveling, and hanging out with friends and family. The recent pandemic has allowed Michele to appreciate how much there is to do right here in Darien.



Marti was born in Ohio, and after her 4 children were also born there, her family moved quite a bit and lived in New Jersey, Virginia, Texas, and Missouri. She has lived in Darien for part of the year since 2004, and moved to town full-time two years ago. Marti is done moving and is in Darien to stay!

Her 4 children have given her 12 grandchildren and when she isn't babysitting for them, she finds time to volunteer. She volunteered for the Red Cross before finding **At Home In Darien**. Marti started volunteering as a "friendly visitor" about three years ago.

Due to COVID-19, her volunteer role has changed and expanded. Currently, Marti primarily does grocery shopping and driving. Marti says that she "enjoys being able to help people" and that "**At Home In Darien** is such a positive organization that enables so many people to stay in their home."

Marti is fascinated with each senior's background and life story. Marti noted that **At Home In Darien** has adapted very well to COVID-19 by ensuring client safety and responding to changing service demands such as a greater need for grocery delivery.

Marti is not only kind and compassionate, but she is a dedicated and outstanding volunteer. Recently, **At Home In Darien** was in a pinch trying to accommodate a ride request and called upon Marti who quickly and happily agreed to help. Her senior passenger said she had a thoroughly enjoyable time with Marti behind the wheel and appreciated her assistance and the friendship!

Fran has lived in Darien her entire life and her 82-year-old father **Bob**, has lived in Darien for 60 years. He served in the Army Reserve as a sergeant, was a sheet metal worker, and later became the Superintendent of Sewers in Darien. Bob has been very active in the community with the Boy Scouts, Youth Hockey, the Rotary Club, the Sewer Commission, and St. Thomas More Church. Fran followed in her father's footsteps by serving 7 years in the Army Reserve National Guard. As an adult child of a senior, Fran takes care of many details of her dad's life.

Unfortunately, Bob became wheelchair bound after a car accident 2 years ago, which led him to begin using **At Home In Darien** for transportation. Fran describes how the services are not only a great help for her father, but also for the entire family. "**At Home In Darien** has been amazing, the people are amazing — the drivers are amazing.



"It's a well-oiled machine that is a godsend and total lifesaver for us."

Wheelchair transportation can be expensive and often times is inconvenient. According to Fran, "We would have to pay \$50 to \$150 per ride for wheel-chair accessible transportation to get [her] dad to the doctor." **At Home In Darien** has been an incredible solution to their transportation needs.

Fran also gives high praise to the marvelous service, and appreciates that **At Home In Darien** often times coordinates last-minute rides for urgent doctor's visits despite a busy schedule. **At Home In Darien** has helped to improve the lives of Fran and Bob because of the dedicated employees and generous donors that make services possible.



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.
- Monthly blog.
- 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.



At Home In Darien Volunteer of the Year 2020

Melissa grew up in Darien and has lived here her entire life. She loves the Mets, her dog Marcel, and enjoys spending time with her family, especially her niece and nephew.

At Home In Darien has helped Melissa with rides to her job in Stamford for many years. Then the tables were turned and Melissa started helping **At Home In Darien** and Darien seniors! Melissa is ready to assist in the office whenever a mailing needs to go out (the Monthly Calendar of Events is sent to hundreds of Darien seniors each month). Melissa is always happy to help and always with a smile!

Melissa is an outstanding, and much appreciated, volunteer for **At Home In Darien**. She was honored this year as Volunteer of the Year. We are so lucky to have her lend a hand!

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.

Thanks for your Support!



At Home In Darien is supported by hundreds of people. Are you one of our generous donors? We depend on your charitable contributions to serve Darien's senior citizens. We are a private, tax-exempt, non-profit 501(c) 3 organization.

Please send your gift today to:

At Home In Darien
2 Renshaw Road, Darien, CT 06820

Did you know you can use your IRA to make a donation and reduce your taxes?

Retirees with certain IRA accounts must begin withdrawals when they reach 70½ years of age or older. These Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) are taxed as ordinary income and must be taken to avoid a penalty. Transferring money from your IRA to a qualifying charity (in lieu of taking an RMD) can be a tax-efficient way of meeting this requirement and satisfying your charitable giving objectives. This is known as a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). You can find additional information about QCD's and donating to **At Home In Darien** on our website. This information is not intended as legal or tax advice. For such advice, please consult an attorney or tax advisor.

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