



Dear Friends,

At Home In Darien looks forward to a new year where we continue to fulfill our mission to help Darien's senior citizens. We are a vital source of assistance for seniors and their loved ones, providing safe transportation, grocery shopping, pick up and delivery of prescriptions, telephone contact, advice, referrals, and customized assistance as needed.

I am so grateful for the support the Darien community provides to make this possible. The free services that you help us provide mean the world to seniors. With your help, we create solutions and provide a safety net to help seniors stay connected and living independently. We are thrilled to announce a very generous gift from The Darien Foundation that has significantly improved our transportation services! Please read more about it inside this issue of **Out & About**.

Seniors face many challenges, and one that is prevalent is scams – on the phone, at the door, and online. This issue of **Out & About** recaps the **At Home In Darien** Annual Meeting on December 10, 2021 and our special guest speaker Attorney General William Tong. He spoke about fraud, the recently launched Elder Justice Hotline, and how his office assists people just like you. I encourage you to find the link on the

home page of our website to watch the meeting in its entirety.

I am also grateful to the **At Home In Darien** Board of Directors who greatly contributes to our success. At the Annual Meeting, we welcomed new member Barbara Scanlon Jessup and appreciate her willingness to serve on our Board and to help **At Home In Darien** continue to thrive. We are also grateful to outgoing board members John Bartlett, M.S. Koly, and Alison Wright, 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. Give us a call at 203.655.2227.

All the best,

Gina Z. Blum

Executive Director of **At Home In Darien**

Gina@AtHomeInDarien.org

Follow us on Instagram 

Like us on Facebook 

our mission:

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

2022 Board of Directors

Susan Bhirud, President

Monica Billeter, Vice President

William Carney, Vice President

John Hess, Vice President

Peter Sosnow, Vice President

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Barbara Scanlon Jessup

John Keating

Michael Nedder

Robin Woods

Elisabeth Marrocolla, Ex officio

Beth Paris, Ex officio



Newly elected
**At Home
In Darien**
Board member
Barbara Scanlon
Jessup.

Ali Ramsteck, Ex officio

Gina Z. Blum, Executive Director

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.

TAXI ANYONE?

Half Price Taxi Vouchers For Sale

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 80 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.



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

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.

Presort Standard
ECRWSS
Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 2124
Stamford, CT

 2 Renshaw Road
Darien, CT 06820

What is a PODCAST?

The dictionary definition of a podcast is:
A digital audio file made available on the Internet for downloading to a computer or mobile device, typically available as a series, new installments of which can be received by subscribers automatically.

In basic terms a podcast is an audio program, just like Talk Radio, but you can subscribe to it on your smartphone or computer, and listen to it whenever you like. Typically a podcast is a series of audio episodes, all focused on a particular topic or theme. In general they are free, on-demand, and niche.

You can find all of your favorite topics that you can explore, download and listen to on your own time, whether it be in the car, at work, at home, working out, and anywhere you find convenient.

The term Podcast is actually a portmanteau of iPod and Broadcast. *A portmanteau is a word blending the sounds and combining the meanings of two others, for example motel (from ‘motor’ and ‘hotel’) or brunch (from ‘breakfast’ and ‘lunch’).*

Podcasting started as a way for individuals to get their message out and build a community of people with similar interests.

| You can find podcasts from: | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| individuals | new podcast-only networks |
| companies / non-profit organizations | comedians |
| radio networks | storytellers |
| TV networks | and a whole lot more... |

There isn’t a pre-determined length, format, style, production level, or anything else. Podcasts can be broken up into “seasons” like a TV show, and a series of episodes. A weekly release for new episodes is common, but there are daily podcasts, monthly podcasts, and really any cadence (or lack thereof) the creator desires. You can subscribe to them, which makes it easy to get notified (via your favorite podcast app) when new episodes come out.




At Home In Darien was honored to take part in a local podcast, *Now We’re Talking Darien*, co-produced and hosted by Darien residents Elizabeth Geiger and Taylor Carter. Tune in to hear **At Home In Darien’s** Executive Director, Gina Blum, and Board member Peter Sosnow, chat with the hosts about our non-profit organization, tell some special stories, and share our gratitude to the community.

If you are new to podcasts try the following:

From your home computer:

- 1) Pull up your browser (safari, google chrome, firefox)
- 2) Type in the web address www.nwtdarien.com
- 3) Click on the episode titled “**At Home In Darien** - Helping our Seniors Age in Place”

From your smartphone:

- 1) Search for the apple podcast app 
- 2) Once the app is open, search for “Now We’re Talking Darien”
- 3) Click on the episode titled “**At Home In Darien** - Helping our Seniors Age in Place”



Recording in the Now We’re Talking Darien studio, Peter Sosnow, Gina Blum and Taylor Carter.



Peter Sosnow, Elizabeth Geiger and Gina Blum

BE PREPARED IN CASE THE ELECTRICITY GOES OFF!

- Have at least one flashlight with extra batteries. Do NOT use candles. They are a fire hazard!
- Have at least one week’s worth of medications on hand.
- Have a battery-operated radio on hand.
- Have a cell-phone charger for your car.
- Keep important telephone numbers in a handy place.
- If you use oxygen, have extra portable oxygen tanks.
- Keep a supply of non-perishable food, drinks and water on hand.
- Have a manual can opener available.
- Keep refrigerators and freezers closed as much as possible.
- Unplug sensitive electrical devices.

- Fill your car’s gas tank.
- Have extra cash on hand.
- Make plans to stay with family or friends if you are uncomfortable staying alone.
- Have a Go Bag ready with a change of clothes and personal necessities.

Call 911 in case of an emergency.

Visit www.darienct.gov and sign up for **CODE RED** to receive town-wide updates.

Would you like to be on Darien Human Services’ Emergency Call List? The staff keeps a list of seniors or disabled individuals to call prior to a storm or town wide emergency. Calls are also made during and after the storm to provide reassurance and make sure you are all right. If you would like to have your name added to the list, please call 203-656-7328.



Announcing A New Handicap Accessible Vehicle

Through the generosity of an \$82,880 grant from The Darien Foundation, **At Home In Darien** has a new, state-of-the-art Toyota Sienna Hybrid Wheelchair Accessible Van. This vehicle will enable seniors and disabled members of our community to have a safer, and more comfortable ride. This van is the second vehicle that The Darien Foundation has funded for **At Home In Darien**. The Foundation also provided a grant in 2015 for a Chrysler 300 sedan.

At Home In Darien knows that transportation is one of the biggest hindrances people face as they try to retain their independence, and this vehicle will enable us to help even more people within our community.

The van will add to the options available to residents and is outfitted with the latest in technology features, including a side entry ramp which “kneels down” to offer a moderate incline for wheelchair passengers. The side ramp also allows passengers dependent upon walkers or other mobility aids, such as canes and crutches, to enter the vehicle using these devices and then be safely seated, stowing the device nearby.

There is ample seating space for an accompanying caregiver to sit adjacent to the passenger. In addition, the vehicle’s interior has adequate height so that the driver can fully stand up, allowing greater leverage with which to maneuver and secure the wheelchair.

The Toyota Sienna is a hybrid fuel-efficient model that will save money at the pump. Additionally, it is attractive and discreet so

that passengers may ride with dignity. The Darien Foundation Executive Director Sarah Woodberry remarked,

“Darien is enriched by being a multigenerational community. We are thrilled to partner with At Home In Darien again to support this initiative to benefit Seniors and special needs residents in Darien. At Home In Darien has been a lifeline for many in our community, especially during the pandemic.”

The new van is easy to reserve by simply calling **At Home In Darien** at 203-655-2227. We hope that more residents reach out to us so that they can stay connected to the community, and access safe transportation through our friendly, professional drivers.

At Home In Darien is incredibly grateful to The Darien Foundation for this amazing new van and for their continued support and generosity. They are an exceptional partner and we are extremely fortunate for their generous response to our community’s needs.

*Susan Bhirud, President of **At Home In Darien** Board of Directors, Gina Blum, Executive Director, Jane Matthews, Professional Driver, Sarah Woodberry, Executive Director of The Darien Foundation and Ward Glassmeyer, Board Chair of The Darien Foundation.*



Connecticut’s Attorney General William Tong at the **At Home In Darien** Annual Meeting.

It is no secret that fraudsters tend to focus on senior citizens. One in 10 older Americans is subject to abuse, which includes financial abuse. In his role as Connecticut’s Attorney General, William Tong is tasked with protecting consumers from such activity. **At Home In Darien** was honored to feature Attorney General Tong at its Annual Meeting, which took place, both in-person and virtually, at Darien Library on December 10, 2021.

Attorney General Tong explained that there has been a surge in elder abuse and fraud during the

pandemic. Fraudulent activity costs Americans \$36 billion annually.

Examples of such activities include:

- Automated robo-calls that sound like a legitimate company, such as Eversource, demanding immediate payment for services.
- Fraudsters overpaying for an item via a check and asking for the overpayment to be returned. The victim later finds that the original check will not clear.
- Scammers masquerading as non-profits, reaching out via telephone or email.

- Price gouging, which is illegal even if a retailer is struggling.

One of the best ways to protect oneself is to not respond directly to phone calls or emails with payment. Rather, look up on your own the phone number or website of the company or charity, and reach out to it directly. Even with the best intentions, smart, savvy individuals can fall for scams.

Seniors are often hesitant to reach out for help or may not know where to turn; thus in 2021 Attorney General Tong helped launch the Elder Justice Hotline. This hotline is a “one-stop-shop” for older adults in Connecticut in need of information, aid, and justice.

The hotline can be reached at 1-860-808-5555 or online by visiting <https://portal.ct.gov/ag/elderhotline>. If you know of a senior who has been a victim of elder abuse, neglect, fraud, and exploitation, or age-based discrimination in the workplace, please encourage him or her to contact the hotline.

To see Attorney General Tong’s presentation in its entirety, please find the link on the home page of our website.



State Representative Terrie Wood, **At Home In Darien’s** Board President Susan Bhirud, and Attorney General of CT William Tong at **At Home In Darien’s** Annual Meeting on December 10, 2021.



At Home In Darien
provides the following
free services to all
Darien residents age 60+:



Transportation within Darien,
Stamford, Norwalk and New
Canaan, Monday - Thursday
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.

Thank you to the many volunteer groups and families who participated in the fall leaf raking program!



We are grateful to the St. Thomas More Youth Group of Darien; Darien YMCA Adventure Guides and Princesses; The Church of Latter Day Saints Youth Darien Ward; Community Fund of Darien's Thriving Youth Task Force; Ice Cats; Jr. Whalers Hockey Team; the Hopper, Wheeler, Ventker, and Vicente families, and Grace Liu, all who spent 259 combined hours raking, bagging and hauling numerous piles of leaves from the homes of 18 Darien seniors. We appreciate the kindness of these groups and individuals and their service to the community.



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

THANK YOU!

Please remember **At Home In Darien**
in your will or trust!

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

Stay connected this winter and make sure you know what's being offered around town... subscribe to our monthly calendar of events! Call **203.655.2227** to request to receive it by mail or email. You will also receive our BLOG notifications where we share important information on various subjects of interest.

