

Senior-ity

The Joy of Putting Darien's Older Residents First



AHID Board Members & Friends at the Memorial Day Parade



AHID Co-Presidents Peter Sosnow (LEFT) and William Carney with past President Susan Bhirud

Are you or do you know a senior citizen in Darien who could use some help—regularly or just occasionally—getting to a doctor, seeing friends or with shopping, yardwork or rides to town events and activities? How about checking on someone isolated, giving them the chance to say, “I’m fine, thanks!” ...a simple act to show you care?

Well, Darien has an organization for that!

The nonprofit At Home in Darien (AHID) is dedicated to helping seniors in town live independently, comfortably and with dignity in their own homes, while connecting them to the community. That’s because AHID knows: Enabling our elderly to remain in their homes as long as they can creates a multi-generational community that strengthens the fabric of Darien for all residents.

AHID is a lifeline to seniors, especially the homebound, providing services—all free of charge thanks to our generous donors, local foundations and State grants—that include:

- ♥ Transportation by two professional drivers via sedan or accessible minivans Monday through Thursday (9am to 4pm) and Friday (9am to 1pm) to doctors’ appointments, physical therapy, social get-togethers, bridge games or lunch dates at the Senior Center



LEFT: Volunteers the Ventker and Vicente families with students from the Harvey School, BELOW: The state-of-the-art accessible van donated by the Darien Foundation in 2021,



- ♥ Supplemental rides from volunteers after hours or when the professional drivers are occupied
 - ♥ Discounted taxi vouchers for other after-hours requests
 - ♥ Names and numbers of vetted service providers for home glitches—when a light won’t work, a stove burner won’t function, etc.
 - ♥ Grocery shopping, errands, home visits, leaf raking and snow shoveling
 - ♥ Friendly calls and visits just to see how somebody is doing
 - ♥ Home safety evaluations
 - ♥ Membership cards with special discounts to 29 local businesses for all adults in Darien over 60
 - ♥ Monthly blog posts
 - ♥ A monthly calendar sent to more than 1,000 seniors in Darien, alerting them to programs at the Senior Center and the Library, High School plays and other events around town
 - ♥ A newsletter—*Out and About*, mailed three times a year to all Darien households
- And there’s nothing like the feeling you get when you help make all this happen.

Overseen by a volunteer Board, AHID employs an executive director, two part time associates and a bookkeeper, in addition to its professional drivers. But it is the volunteers that form the backbone of AHID, with all ages in on the good works. More than 100 volunteers, ages 10 to over 70 years old, gave approximately 1,600 hours and 3,000 one-way rides in 2022 through AHID. It all comes from Darien residents who offer an hour or two a week in exchange for the smiles, warmth and gratitude they get from the 300+ seniors who receive services from AHID. In an especially gratifying turn for AHID, youth groups from Saint Thomas More, the Church of Latter Day Saints, the Community Fund’s Thriving Youth Task Force, Middlesex Middle School Gives Back, Girl Scout Troop 219 and students from the Harvey School assisted in fall cleanups.

The seeds of At Home in Darien were planted in 2006 when the Community Fund of Darien and members of



AHID Board Member Barbara Scanlon Jessup and senior Barbara Thorne at the Fall DCA Luncheon

the First Congregational Church and Saint Luke’s Episcopal Church searched for ways to better serve Darien seniors. They created Aging in Place with later merged with Gallivant, a longtime transportation service for seniors, to become At Home in Darien.

There was no immediate model for what developed. Neighboring towns offer similar services through various organizations, but they are fee-based. AHID committed to providing support free of charge, funded by local citizens helping neighbors.

Anyone who has ever had an ailing or frail parent, loved an elderly relative or friend or known any senior who lived in their own home and cherished their independence understands just how fortunate we are to have At Home in Darien in our town.

Like all nonprofits, AHID relies on the generosity of individual donors and local philanthropic organizations, such as the Darien Foundation, who funded a new, state-of-the-art accessible van in 2021 for AHID.

To learn more about At Home in Darien and ways you can support this incredibly rewarding work, call AHID Executive Director Chris Jones at 203-655-2227 or visit athomeindarien.org. ♥

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY: AT HOME IN DARIEN