

Dear Friends,

If you haven't heard of **At Home In Darien**, then you are missing a great story!

For those of you who may not be aware, we are a private, non-profit Darien organization that is focused purely on enabling Darien's senior community aged 60+ to live independently and at home for as long as possible. We partner with other organizations in town and with some special individuals to provide a variety of critical services. What are those services?

• **Transportation.** Medical appointments make up a good percentage of our rides but this is not our only focus. Need a ride to the grocery store? We will do it. Need to visit the salon or barber? Absolutely. How about a trip to your favorite coffee shop? Of course. Our transportation services are designed to provide access to anywhere within Darien, Stamford, Norwalk, and New Canaan. So if you want to go to Darien's wonderful Mather Center, or to the amazing library, or somewhere in these other towns...we will take you and pick you up!

• **Home Services.** We are proud to work with a large number of volunteers that share in our special mission. Whether providing seniors with a shopper, a visitor, or helper, we have caring and trusted volunteers that will help seniors with a variety of tasks. We even have dedicated volunteer groups and individuals who will come to seniors' homes to rake leaves in the fall or shovel snow off of the public sidewalks in the winter.

• **Community Engagement.** We connect seniors to the community in a variety of ways, including compiling events taking place in Darien into a Monthly Calendar of Events. Additionally, all seniors 60 years of age or older, are also eligible to receive our membership card, which allows members to receive incentives and discounts with several local businesses.

And did we say that these services are **free** for Darien seniors?

We want to reach more Darien seniors and support them however possible. If you are a senior, and even if you aren't but want to learn more about our services, give us a call at **(203) 655-2227**. We would love to hear from you!



William Carney  
Co-President of the  
Board of Directors  
**At Home In Darien**



Peter Sosnow  
Co-President of the  
Board of Directors  
**At Home In Darien**



Chris Jones  
Executive Director of  
**At Home In Darien**  
[Chris@AtHomeInDarien.org](mailto:Chris@AtHomeInDarien.org)

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## At Home In Darien Announces Changes to Board of Directors



L to R: Peter Sosnow (Incoming Board Co-President), Susan Bhirud (Outgoing Board President), William Carney (Incoming Board Co-President)

**At Home In Darien** and its Board members honored outgoing Board President Susan Bhirud at its Annual Meeting on December 8th, and thanked her for the four years she spent leading the organization. Particular note was made of Susan's stewardship in successfully navigating the organization through the challenges brought on by COVID. The Board also introduced new Co-Presidents William Carney and Peter Sosnow and new Board member Marcia Cleary, while thanking outgoing Board member Peter Carnes for his long-term service and the significant impact he has had on the organization and its members within the community.

### 2023 Board of Directors

William Carney, Co-President  
Peter Sosnow, Co-President  
Susan Bhirud, Vice President  
Monica Billeter, Vice President  
John Hess, Vice President  
John Keating, Vice President

Sue Okie, Vice President  
Tamsin Sickinger, Secretary  
James Metzger, Treasurer  
Bob Baylis  
Mark Bergen  
Marcia Cleary

Amy Harned  
Barbara Scanlon Jessup  
Robin Woods

Beth Paris, Ex officio  
Marianne Paterniti, Ex officio  
Ali Ramsteck, Ex officio

### our mission:

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

## Volunteer Drivers Needed

**At Home In Darien** is proud to enlist the support of a variety of volunteers who help us provide the special care and services that seniors in our community so richly deserve. A particular need, however, is for volunteer drivers. These volunteers complement our staff drivers and enable us to support even more of our seniors' local transportation needs. You can let us know what works best for you in terms of mornings, afternoons, or a particular day and we would call you should a need arise. If you are interested in learning more about this rewarding opportunity, please give us a call at **(203) 655-2227**.



# At Home In Darien Blog - The Importance of Reading Books

People like to read for a variety of reasons and there are a number of benefits in picking up and taking the time to read a book. For example, reading:

- Exercises the brain
- Provides entertainment
- Enhances concentration and improves your ability to focus
- Improves literacy
- Provides motivation to overcome difficulties or try new things
- Reduces life’s stresses

But researchers from the Yale University School of Public Health have identified perhaps the greatest benefit of all: the correlation between reading and living a longer life!

Using data from a nationwide health study that included over 3,600 participants aged 50+, Yale researchers determined that people who read books for up to 3.5 hours a week had a 17% reduction in mortality rate over a 12-year follow-up period when compared to non-book readers. People who read more than 3.5 hours a week had an even greater reduction in mortality (23%) during this period. Overall, the researchers determined that the participants who read books had a two-year longer life span than the participants who did not read books at all!

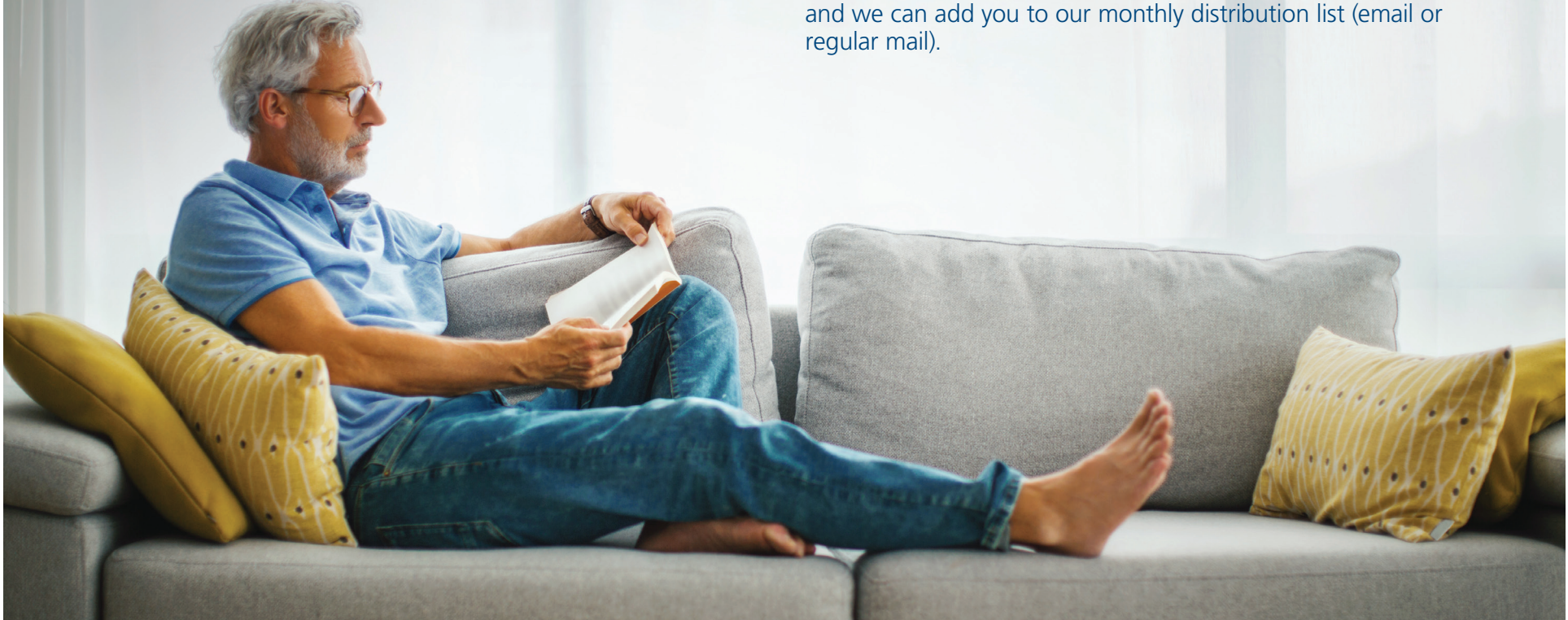
The study is particularly interesting because reading books typically involves two cognitive processes that aid the survival advantage. Specifically, reading books:

- 1) Promotes “deep reading”, which is a slow process and occurs as the reader connects different parts of the material and finds relationships and applications to the broader world around them
- 2) Supports emotional intelligence, social understanding, and empathy

Importantly, the longer life spans identified through the study were attributed to the benefits of reading, and not the readers’ previous cognitive abilities. In short, it’s not that people read because they’re smart, they are smart because they read!

So, pick up that book you have been planning to read and get started. And why not start at the Darien Library? While you’re there you can get copies of the latest bestsellers, downloadable e-Books or e-Audiobooks to further enhance those cognitive processes! Another resource for seniors is the Darien Senior Center. Consider joining the **Mather Center Book Club**. For more information call **(203) 656-7490**.

To read our monthly blogs, please visit us at **<http://athomeindarien.org/blog/>** or call us at **(203) 655-2227** and we can add you to our monthly distribution list (email or regular mail).



## 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.



## 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.



**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.



# Annual Luncheon at the Darien Community Association



**At Home In Darien** was thrilled to host its Annual Luncheon on November 3rd. Over 100 senior citizens attended the special event, which was held at and co-sponsored by the DCA. The luncheon featured author and humorist Allia Zobel Nolan, who entertained guests while speaking about her book Laugh Out Loud: 40 Women Humorists Celebrate Then and Now...Before We Forget. Nolan focused much of her speech on the benefits of laughter, emphasizing the quote from her creative inspiration Erma Bombeck, "He who laughs...lasts!" Words to live by, and we are already looking forward to the next luncheon in Fall 2023!



Upper Left: AHID Board member Barbara Scanlon Jessup (L) with member Barbara Thorne

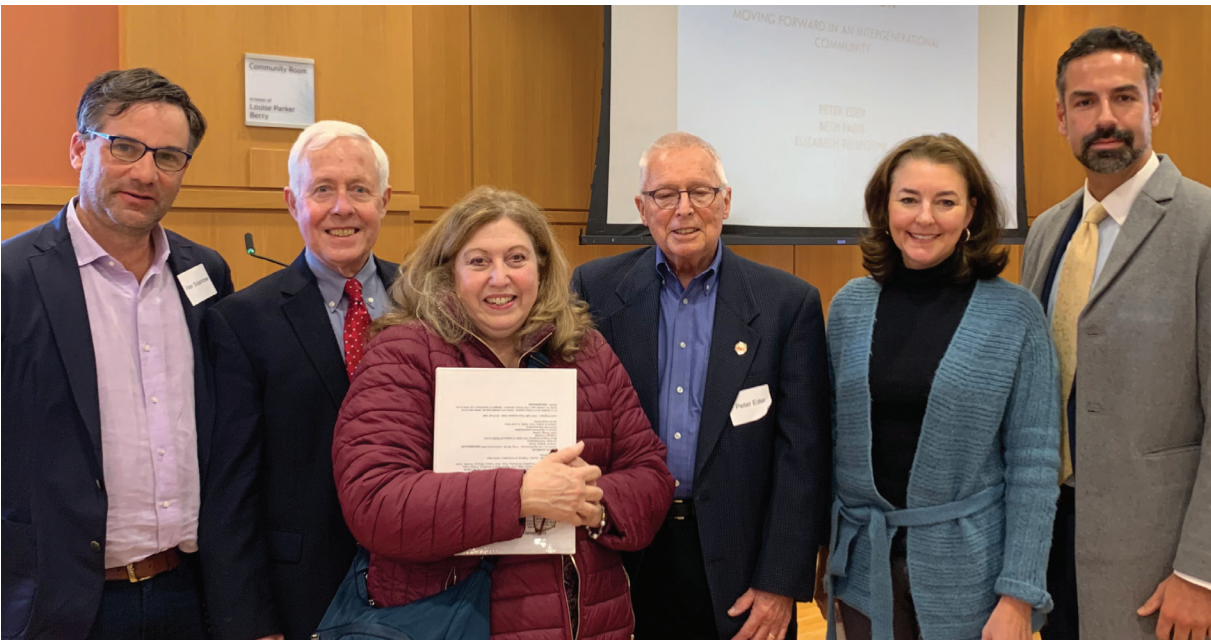
Upper Right: Guest Speaker, author Allia Zobel Nolan with AHID Executive Director Chris Jones

Lower Left: Lunch guests enjoying good food and a few laughs!

Lower Right: AHID Board member Peter Carnes (L) and lunch attendees

## At Home In Darien Annual Meeting

**Finally!** After two years of meetings impacted by COVID-19, **At Home In Darien** was happy to hold its Annual Meeting completely in person. The meeting was held on December 8th in the Darien Library's Community Room, and began with First Selectman Monica McNally reading a proclamation declaring the date "**At Home In Darien Day**". Guests included Tracy Marra, CT State Senator-elect, Malinda Polite, AARP's area representative, and Michael Werner, Legislative Aging Policy Analyst for the CT General Assembly. The meeting also featured a panel discussion titled "Moving Forward in an Intergenerational Community," and included Beth Paris, Director of Senior Programs at the Mather Center, Peter Eder, a member of the Darien Commission on Aging, and Elizabeth Pellegrini, a Darien resident and rider with **At Home In Darien's** transportation services. Each panelist provided his or her perspective regarding how Darien can best support seniors moving forward, with Elizabeth Pellegrini providing some valuable feedback in how AHID can further enhance its services to continue to uniquely support Darien's senior community.



Above: L to R: Peter Sosnow, William Carney, Beth Paris, Peter Eder, Tracy Marra, Michael Werner

Far Left: Panel Discussion (L to R: Peter Eder, Beth Paris, Elizabeth Pellegrini)

Lower Right: **At Home In Darien's** Drivers, Jane Mathews and Drew Burke





**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. and Friday  
9 a.m. to 1 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.



## 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!

## Volunteer Leaf Rakers



It is safe to say that there are not too many  
people who enjoy raking leaves...except,  
perhaps, the amazing volunteers who  
support **At Home In Darien** and Darien's  
seniors!

This fall our volunteers once again traversed  
the town to rake leaves at the homes of 19  
different seniors. The cold weather and heavy  
leaves weren't the only challenge, as some  
of the volunteers also navigated through  
heavy rain on one of the clean-up days. The  
volunteers, who spent a combined 396 hours  
raking, bagging, and removing all leaves,  
included the following groups and families:

- The St. Thomas More Youth Group  
of Darien
- The Church of Latter Day Saints  
Youth Darien Ward
- Community Fund of Darien's  
Thriving Youth Task Force
- MMS Gives Back
- Troop 219 (girls troop in  
Scouts BSA)
- Students from The Harvey  
School
- The Wheeler, Ventker, and  
Vicente families
- Grace Liu, Aadya Pai, Amanda  
Smith and Grant Wang

**At Home In Darien** is extremely  
grateful to all volunteers for their  
time and hard work, and their unique  
efforts to help seniors continue to  
live independently and comfortably in  
their own homes.

