

At Home In Darien Acquires New Van to Expand Transportation Services for Seniors

At Home In Darien is thrilled to announce the acquisition of a new 12-person van, a significant addition to our transportation services that will enhance mobility and connection for Darien's seniors. This exciting development was made possible by the generosity of our dedicated donors, whose support ensures that older adults in our community can continue to live independently, stay engaged, and build meaningful relationships.

Transportation has long been a core service of **At Home In Darien**, helping seniors get to medical appointments, grocery stores, and essential errands. With the addition of this larger vehicle, we are expanding our capabilities to offer special group rides that will bring seniors together for social, cultural, and recreational outings. Whether it's a trip to a museum, a



concert, or a local community event, these group outings will help foster new friendships and create shared experiences that enrich lives.

For many seniors, isolation and loneliness are significant challenges. The new van is more than just a mode of transportation—it's a vehicle for connection. By providing opportunities for group outings and community engagement, we aim to reduce social isolation and help seniors feel more connected to the broader Darien community.

Events and group rides will be communicated via AHID's Monthly Calendar of Events newsletter. Please contact us at (203) 655-2227 if you are not currently receiving our

newsletter and would like to be added to the list, or if you have any questions or suggestions regarding utilization of the van.

our mission:

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

2025 Board of Directors

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The Darien Foundation
OPPORTUNITY • INNOVATION • IMPACT

Special thanks to the Darien Foundation for their partnership and donation of the vehicles that enabled us to provide nearly 4,300 one-way rides for Darien seniors during 2024. We are grateful for their support in making our mission a reality!

SAVE THE DATE

At Home In Darien's Annual Luncheon

at the Darien Community Association
Thursday, May 29th, 2025 at 11:30am

**Open to all Darien Seniors
Free of Charge
Reservations required**

Guest Art Gottlieb will speak on recognizing, celebrating, and enduring life's milestones

CO-SPONSORED BY THE DCA



Discover the Darien Swap Shop: A Community Treasure



Located at the Darien Transfer Station, the Darien Swap Shop is a volunteer-run organization that gives new life to donated, usable items—completely free for Darien residents! By offering a space where people can find and exchange household goods, toys, books, and more, the Swap Shop helps reduce waste and promotes sustainability. The Swap Shop takes usable items only, nothing broken, stained, chipped, cracked or with missing pieces.

Want to get involved? The Swap Shop welcomes volunteers! With flexible 1-2 hour shifts per month, it's an easy and rewarding way to give back to the community while helping the environment. Stop by, find a treasure, or lend a hand! To volunteer or to get additional information regarding the Swap Shop, send an email to swapshop@darienct.gov. If you are looking for other volunteer opportunities that involve advancing environmental issues in Darien, consider joining the larger Advisory Committee on Sustainability or another town committee or commission.

Follow the Swap Shop on Instagram [@DarienSwapShop](#) and [@DarienRecyclingCenter](#), for current hours and weather-related closings.



2nd Annual Bingo Event at Compass Real Estate

Twenty-five local seniors gathered for the 2nd annual Bingo event on February 12th, co-sponsored by **At Home In Darien** and Compass Real Estate. Laughter and excitement filled the room as ten lucky winners took home special prizes. Guests enjoyed a homemade feast, featuring chili and spanakopita prepared by **At Home In Darien's** Board President, Debra Parnon, along with delicious sandwiches provided by the Compass team. A heartfelt thank you to Vicki D'Agostino and her Compass team for not only holding the event at their office on Corbin Drive, but also for making a generous donation to **At Home In Darien** to support our mission helping seniors live independently and as long as possible in the Darien community.



Compass' John Bainton calling out Bingo numbers

Bingo participants getting ready to start



AHID members with some of the donated pies, including Tim and Kathleen Maher (pictured above left) and the Nara family (pictured above right)



Thank You, Darien High School Football Team!

A huge thank you to the Darien High School Football team for their generosity in donating homemade pies to **At Home In Darien**, as part of the team's 8th annual Men Making Pies event! Several of AHID's members benefitted from the delicious desserts and the team's kindness extends further into and beyond our community, as they also donated pies to the staff at Darien High School, Darien First Responders, and the New Covenant House in Stamford. We are grateful for their dedication to giving back—what a wonderful tradition!

Valentine Day Connections

Intergenerational connections are vital for building strong, compassionate, and resilient communities. At Home In Darien has an ongoing goal of fostering these connections, as they help bridge generation gaps, preserve and pass down wisdom, and inspire a spirit of giving and service. This spirit of giving and service was recently and uniquely reflected by Darien High School senior Elise Shulman and her Eagle Scout project, which was the cornerstone of an initiative that connected efforts by Elise and her friends to other local youth groups and to **At Home In Darien**, its volunteers, and ultimately to several of At Home's senior members.

Elise wanted to do something different for her project and said, "I knew that I could help people". She created promotional materials to create awareness and drive donations, and also

spent time soliciting donations outside of local delis, grocery stores and retailers. Through her efforts, Elise was able to collect enough donations to underwrite the cost of buying materials to make 250 beautiful, custom blankets. Making the blankets was no easy or



Members of the Ox Ridge Kids Care Club creating special valentine cards for seniors

quick task, as each blanket took close to an hour to make. Around the same time, **At Home In Darien** was invited to participate at the monthly meeting for the Ox Ridge Kids Care Club, where over 30 elementary students spent a morning creating valentines cards for distribution to seniors. Special cards were also created and provided by the Darien Depot's VolunTweens and Volunteer Club groups. The blankets, combined with the special cards, were packaged and distributed to **At Home In Darien** senior members by AHID volunteers.



The Greatest Generation: Pat Lombardo

Pat Lombardo has been a proud resident of Darien since 1971, but his story stretches far beyond the streets of our Connecticut town. A member of America's Greatest Generation, Pat's life has been marked by service, resilience, and an unwavering sense of duty.

Born and raised in Stamford, Pat was a track star at Stamford High School, a gifted athlete with a promising future. He was offered a scholarship to Manhattan College upon graduation, but when duty called, he answered. Instead of pursuing collegiate glory, he chose to serve his country, enlisting in the U.S. Navy during World War II.

Pat began his military career as a Gunner's Mate aboard the U.S.S. Iowa and later the U.S.S. Columbus. Though he saw no direct combat, his service in the Pacific theater played a vital role in supporting the war effort. The discipline and skills he honed during these years would serve him well in the decades to come.



Pat Lombardo at the Darien Senior Center

front lines had what they needed. On one such mission to Vietnam, Pat and his crew landed their plane only to discover the tail section had been riddled with bullet holes—silent proof of the dangers they faced in a warzone. Though he never engaged in direct combat, the risks were ever-present, and his dedication never wavered.

After 28 years in uniform, Pat transitioned to a new form of service: firefighting. He joined the Stamford Fire Department,

where he spent 32 years protecting lives and property. Rising through the ranks to become a Lieutenant and later a Captain, Pat was known for his leadership, bravery, and calm demeanor in the face of danger.

In 1955, Pat married the love of his life, Grace. Together, they built a life rooted in love, family, and community. When the time came to raise their five children, they chose Darien, drawn by the town's excellent school system and strong sense of community. For decades, the Lombardo family thrived in Darien, and Pat became a respected and admired member of the town.

Even after retiring from the fire department, Pat remained active. For the past five years, he has been a regular at Darien's Senior Center, where he is a beloved presence, entertaining fellow seniors with stories and bringing smiles to everyone. At 98 years old, he still drives, living independently and embodying the spirit of perseverance.

Through his military service, his career as a firefighter, and his enduring commitment to family and community, Pat Lombardo has left an indelible mark on all who have had the privilege to know him. He is more than just a veteran, more than just a hero—he is an inspiration and testament to the core values we should all aspire to achieve.

As Darien continues to grow and change, one thing remains certain: seniors such as Pat Lombardo will always be an important fabric of the town's history and spirit.



Pat and Grace Lombardo on their honeymoon

As history unfolded, Pat remained steadfast in his commitment to the military. During both the Korean and Vietnam Wars, he continued his service, this time in the air. As part of a cargo transport crew, he flew vital supplies to Western Pacific territories, ensuring that those on the



Debra Parnon Named President of the Board for At Home In Darien

At Home In Darien is pleased to announce Debra Parnon as the new President of the Board. Debra, who has served as an **At Home In Darien** Board member for the past year, is a dedicated community leader with decades of volunteer service. She brings a wealth of experience to her new role as well as a deep commitment to enhancing the lives of Darien's senior residents.

A longtime Darien resident, Debra and her husband Tom have called the town home for 41 years, raising their three sons here. She has played a pivotal role in numerous local organizations, demonstrating an unwavering dedication to community service. Her leadership experience spans across a wide range of initiatives, from serving as President of A Better Chance in Darien to guiding young scouts as Cub Scout Den Leader and Cub Master for Pack 161 for over a decade.

Debra's influence extends to community projects such as serving as Commodore for the Darien Junior Sailing Team and chairing the Weed Beach Building Committee. She is also a founding member of both the Tree Conservancy of Darien and the Darien Athletic Foundation, contributing to the town's environmental and athletic enrichment.

Most recently, Debra has focused on senior services and support, working as an instructor for engagement at Atria Senior Living and serving as the Engagement Director at The Residence at Selleck's Woods. Her work with seniors has deepened her understanding of their needs and reinforced her passion for ensuring they remain active, connected, and supported.

Debra's leadership and dedication will undoubtedly strengthen the organization's impact and outreach in the community.



AHID members Ann Dubbs and Catherine Ring enjoying their special valentine gifts



Elise Shulman (Left), raising money for her project along with Tavisha Thakker (Center) and Greg Shulman (Right)

This initiative was particularly meaningful because it connected three different generations—Elise and her friends, the young volunteers from the Darien Depot groups, the young students at Ox Ridge Kids Care Club, **At Home In Darien's** adult volunteers, and senior citizens in Darien. "We are so grateful for Elise's generosity and the love and care that she and the Ox Ridge students put into this project," said Michele Treacy, who manages **At Home In Darien's** volunteer activities. "These blankets are not just about warmth and the cards aren't just about caring; they represent the strength of our community and the bonds between generations."

A special thank you to Elise and her friends, to the Darien Depot's VolunTweens and Volunteer Club groups, to the Ox Ridge Kids Care club, and to **At Home In Darien's** volunteers for bringing some amazing smiles and joy to Darien seniors.



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.; 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.



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.

MESSAGE FROM AT HOME IN DARIEN

Dear Friends,

You may have noticed something a little different about this issue of our newsletter—our introduction letter has moved! Instead of opening with our thoughts on the front page, we've decided to shift this message to the back page. Why? Because we believe the most important voices in this publication belong to our incredible Darien seniors.

Each issue of *Out & About* is filled with stories, updates and highlights about our senior community. These are the stories that deserve to be front and center. Whether it's a profile on a longtime resident, a feature on a new program, or just photos from a group event or activity, our goal is to make sure their voices are heard first.

That doesn't mean we won't continue to share updates and insights with you—we're just giving our seniors the spotlight they so richly deserve. We hope this small change

makes our newsletter even more engaging and meaningful for everyone.

Thank you for being part of our community and for taking the time to celebrate some of the wonderful seniors who make it so special. And most importantly, thank you for the continued support which enables us to provide our unique services that Darien seniors so richly deserve.



Debbie Parnon
President of the
Board of Directors
At Home In Darien



Chris Jones
Executive Director of
At Home In Darien
Chris@AtHomeInDarien.org

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**Thank You, Darien, for Supporting
At Home In Darien**



At Home In Darien is deeply grateful for the unwavering support of the Darien community. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, we rely on the generosity of our residents to fulfill our mission of helping seniors live independently, comfortably, and with dignity in their own homes. Your contributions enable us to provide essential services such as transportation, friendly visits, and community engagement programs that enhance the lives of Darien's older adults.

We are proud to be primarily funded by private donations, and there are many easy ways to give. You can make a secure donation online at our website, ensuring that your gift immediately supports local seniors. Another impactful way to contribute is through a bequest in your will or trust. These planned gifts not only create a lasting legacy but are also exempt from estate taxes. If you have an IRA and are aged 70½ or older, you can donate part of your required minimum distribution directly to At Home In Darien, reducing your taxable income while supporting a cause you care about. Of course, traditional donations by check are always welcomed and greatly appreciated.

Every donation, no matter the size, makes a meaningful difference in the lives of our seniors. Thank you for your continued generosity and commitment to our mission. Together, we are strengthening our community and ensuring that Darien's older adults thrive.

To donate or learn more, please visit our website at <https://athomeindarien.org/>

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.

Over 100 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.

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

Stay connected this spring 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.

