

Helping Darien senior citizens live in their homes

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Helping Darien seniors live independently, comfortably and with dignity in their own homes as long as possible is **the** mission of Aging in Place in Darien, a new program of **the Community Fund** of Darien. Developed after two years of research, assessment and **community** input, **the** program is free to all Darien residents age 60 and over.

Aging in Place in Darien has a coordinator, Alyssa Israel, who is ready to assist Darien residents.

Whether they are looking for a plumber, electrician, landscaper, housekeeper or handyman, Israel has a ready list of vetted service providers who are affordable, trustworthy and reliable.

In addition, Aging in Place will connect seniors or their caregivers with any program or service in **the community** that meets their needs.

"We will be able to help Darien residents access a whole host of services that they may have not been aware of before, from health and fitness programs in **the community**, to at-home counseling services covered by Medicare, transportation and caregiver resources," said Israel. "Don't hesitate to call for any reason at all."

In addition to a free telephone referral service, Darien residents will receive a free Senior Resource Directory upon request and a quarterly newsletter, Out and About, which will be mailed to all seniors in Darien at **the** end of January.

"Aging in Place in Darien is **the** result of wonderful **community** collaboration," said Kiki Karpen, executive director of **the Community Fund** of Darien.

After over two years of assessment and planning by **the Community Fund** and many **community** partners, **the** Aging in Place Advisory Board now oversees **the** program. Members of **the** board include representatives from **the Community Fund**, Darien's Department of Social Services, Darien **Community** Association, Darien Senior Center, Senior Men's Association, First Congregational Church of Darien, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Darien EMS-Post 53, Darien Library, Family Centers, Gallivant and **the** Commission on Aging, as well as several active **community** volunteers.

In Darien, **the** senior population is expected to double, from 2,340 seniors age 65 and older counted in **the** 2000 Census, to a projected 4,508 seniors by **the** year 2030.

"We know from national studies and our own local focus group study that as many as 90 percent of Darien seniors want to stay in their homes as they age. We want to help them do this in every way we can," said Karpen.

To take advantage of Aging in Place in Darien and to receive a free Senior Resource Directory, call Alyssa Israel at 202-2912, Monday through Thursday, 10 to 3.