

COMMUNITY FUND TO HIRE AGING IN PLACE COORDINATOR

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The board of directors of **the Community Fund** of Darien recently voted unanimously to hire a part-time coordinator for its Aging in Place in Darien initiative. Aging in Place (AIP) in Darien has been under study for almost two years and is based on **the** premise that individuals who are growing older should be able to stay in their homes in Darien.

Speaking on behalf of **the Community Fund** Board at a recent Board of Selectmen's meeting, Martha Rhein said, "**The** board enthusiastically and unanimously voted to support **the** creation and funding of this position. Board members were particularly excited about **the** fact that this is **the** direct result of **the** proactive leadership of **the** Human Services Planning Council and two years of serious study by social service professionals and **community** volunteers."

She added, "This reinforces **the** important role of **the** HSPC in identifying and addressing social service needs in Darien through **community** cooperation and collaboration, and **the** important role of **The Community Fund** of Darien as funder."

The initiative began when a subcommittee of **the Community Fund's** Human Services Planning Council was given **the** tasks of examining various aging in place models around **the** country, investigating **the** needs of this population, identifying gaps in services in Darien, and then developing recommendations to address **the** issues.

Members of **the** subcommittee included representatives from **the** Department of Social Services, **the** Commission on Aging, Darien Senior Center, **the** DCA, Family Centers, Post 53, **the** First Congregational Church, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, **the** American Federation for Aging Research and **the Community Fund**.

The subcommittee conducted a number of focus groups with seniors in town.

These focus groups determined that **the** three services with **the** most significant gaps are: transportation, communication/isolation, and handyman/home repair services.

The group convened a summit on senior issues, bringing together more than 50 senior service providers for a presentation of **the** AIP findings and discussion about how to address these primary issues.

This summit resulted in three new subcommittees that took on **the** responsibilities of further investigation and **the** development of specific solutions.

The new AIP coordinator will report to **the** AIP Advisory Committee of **the Community Fund** and will work collaboratively with **community** agencies and organizations to help seniors stay in their homes.

For more information about **the Community Fund** of Darien, contact **the** office at 655-8775, or visit **community-funddarien.org**.

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