

Darien Human Services Annual Report (2017-2018)

The Human Services Department continued to provide support to the residents of Darien to promote the physical, emotional and economic wellbeing for all.

The Human Services Department provides a wide variety of services, including supportive counseling, assessment for benefits and program eligibility, as well as case management for any Darien resident. In addition, the staff provides crisis intervention, assistance with mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence issues. We also provide emergency financial assistance. All client information is strictly confidential. Residents can meet with staff in our office, via phone, email or in their home if requested. A social worker is available Thursdays at the Mather Center.

The *Back to School Program* is a collaborative effort between Darien Human Services, Salvation Army, and donors. This year 124 children received a new backpack, school supplies and a Payless gift cards.

We submitted 41 applications this year for the *Renter's Rebate Program*; 39 applications were approved for a total of \$23,122.67 in grants to our clients.

During *Medicare Open Enrollment* we reviewed Medicare Part D drug coverage for 48 individuals. Of those 48, 11 changed their plans and saved a total of \$11,452.

Darien Human Services provided 241 Thanksgiving meals to families and individuals in conjunction with Person to Person.

During the holiday season, Darien Human Services provided 293 meals for families, individuals and seniors. Additionally, 178 children and seniors received gifts this year. We were overwhelmed by the generosity of the community.

We had another successful year ringing the bell for Salvation Army outside of Palmer's Market. We had volunteers once again from the Masons, Darien Men's Club, and Boy Scout Troop 53. They raised a total of \$4,773. 90 % of these funds directly benefit our department.

During the year, Darien Human Services provided *utility and fuel assistance* to 138 clients funded by

the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Darien Fuel Bank, Darien Unit of Salvation Army, Operation Fuel, The Community Fund of Darien and our emergency fund.

We continue to monitor cases of hoarding in collaboration with the Fire Marshal's office. We provide ongoing support and guidance in these cases.

The *Blight Ordinance* went in to effect January 1st, 2017. The Director serves on the Blight Review Board and assists the Blight Officer with any residents who may require involvement from Human Services (seniors, low-income households or hoarding situations in particular).

The *Home Goods Closet*, provides eligible residents with cleaning supplies, paper goods and personal hygiene items. Our clients received 6862 items this year. We are grateful for private donations from individuals and groups.

The *Loan Closet* provides walkers, canes and wheelchairs for residents to borrow on a short-term basis.

Our *Senior Resource Directory* provides information about town, regional and state social services available to seniors.

We maintain an *Emergency Call List* for seniors and disabled residents who would like a call prior to and after a storm or town-wide emergency.