

Department of Human Services

Quarterly Report

April 2019 through June 2019

Ali Ramsteck, LCSW, Director

Administration and Programs

Human Services Commission

Kate Durocher volunteered to be the Chair of the Commission. In May, we welcomed Janet King, Director of The Community Fund of Darien, to our Commission. We are grateful to both of them for their service.

Small Town Directors' Meeting

Several years ago, a group of local towns periodically held a Small Town Directors of Human Services meeting, but the group eventually disbanded. However, I saw such value in these meetings that I recently reinstated them. The Directors met for the first time in May and plan to meet every two months. It is a wonderful way for us to collaborate and share what we've learned. Human Services Directors from Darien, New Canaan, Westport, Wilton, Weston, Easton, Fairfield and Trumbull are all participating.

Renter's Rebate

Renter's Rebate, a state-funded program that provides a rebate to low-income senior or disabled clients on rent and utility payments made during the previous year, is well underway. Diane Barston, Program Assistant, is processing all of the applications again this year. We began accepting applications on April 1, 2019 and will continue to do so until September 30, 2019. Refund checks are mailed at the end of October. The Rebate is extremely helpful to our clients on limited budgets.

Operation Fuel

Over the past few years, Operation Fuel has had supplemental funds allowing them to serve thousands of additional clients. These funds have been fully depleted. As a result, funding will be more limited in the future.

Last year, we received \$10,000 in funding for the Winter/Spring program and we used \$6,852.84 of the allotted grant money. This year, we had \$5,000 in available funds and utilized all \$5,000. In FY2018-2019, Operation Fuel helped 23 Darien households with a total of \$8388.00 in grants. In FY2017-2018, 30 Darien households were helped with a total of \$11,575.49 in grants. We are waiting to hear what our funding will be for the Summer Program which begins July 22, 2019. We already have 4 clients scheduled to apply as soon as the program opens.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

It was another challenging year working with CAAWC which processes our LIHEAP applications. Many of our clients' applications were not approved because of missing documentation, but were never contacted. As a result, quite a few clients had to reapply which means duplicate work for both clients and staff (which is very time-consuming).

A total of 81 households received Energy Assistance this year for a total of \$38,532.13 in grants.

Back-to-School

We are preparing for our *Back-to-School* program which begins on August 12th and runs through August 30th. Last year, we provided back packs, school supplies and a Kohl's gift card to 124 children. This year, we anticipate an increase in the number of children served as we have recently had several new larger families visit our offices for services.

The Parent Teacher Organizations of Tokeneke, Hindley, Ox Ridge and Royle Schools arranged for parents to donate money to Human Services when pre-ordering their child's school supplies. Their efforts provide needed funds for our Back-to-School Program and are very much appreciated.

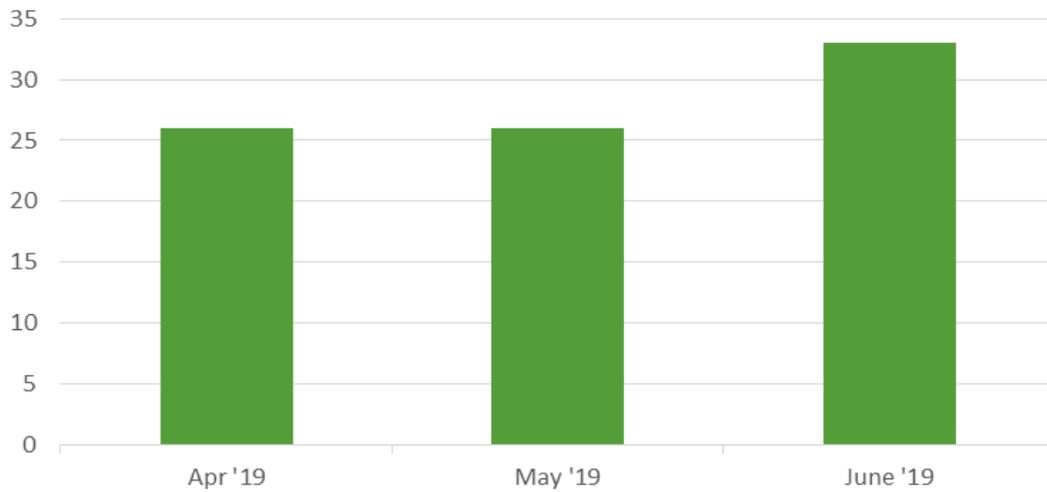
Conferences /Meetings

- Ali and Diane have been meeting with Kathy Finnegan from the Sustainable CT Committee. We are collaborating with Kathy and the Committee on Action 7.8.
- Ali attended a Regional Meeting of Municipal Fairfield County Disability Advocates hosted by Westport Human Services. Together with the administration, Human Services will be developing a Darien Commission or Task Force for the Disabled.
- Ali and Cynthia visited Maplewood Assisted Living Facility in Darien and met with the Executive Director to discuss services available at Maplewood as well as those available through Darien Human Services.
- Ali attended a Community Leaders Strategic Planning meeting at the YMCA
- Ali attended the annual Municipal Veteran's Representative training in Rocky Hill, CT.
- Cynthia and Ali participated in a webinar on Emergency Preparedness presented by The Regional Healthcare Training on At Risk Populations.
- Cynthia and Ali attended Excel training sessions at Town Hall.
- Ali completed a 10 hour Motivation Interview training.
- Ali attended a seminar on Cultivating Cultural Humility.

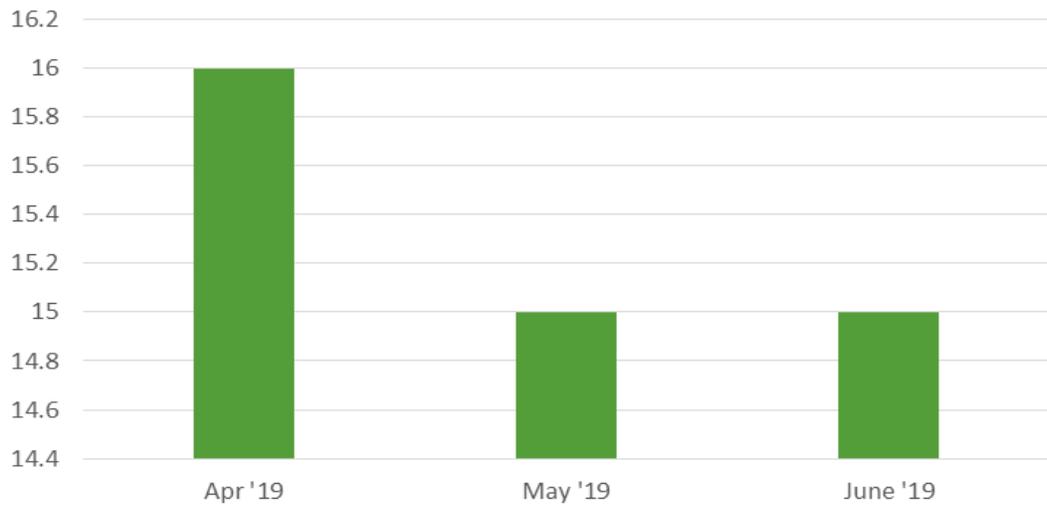
Case Management

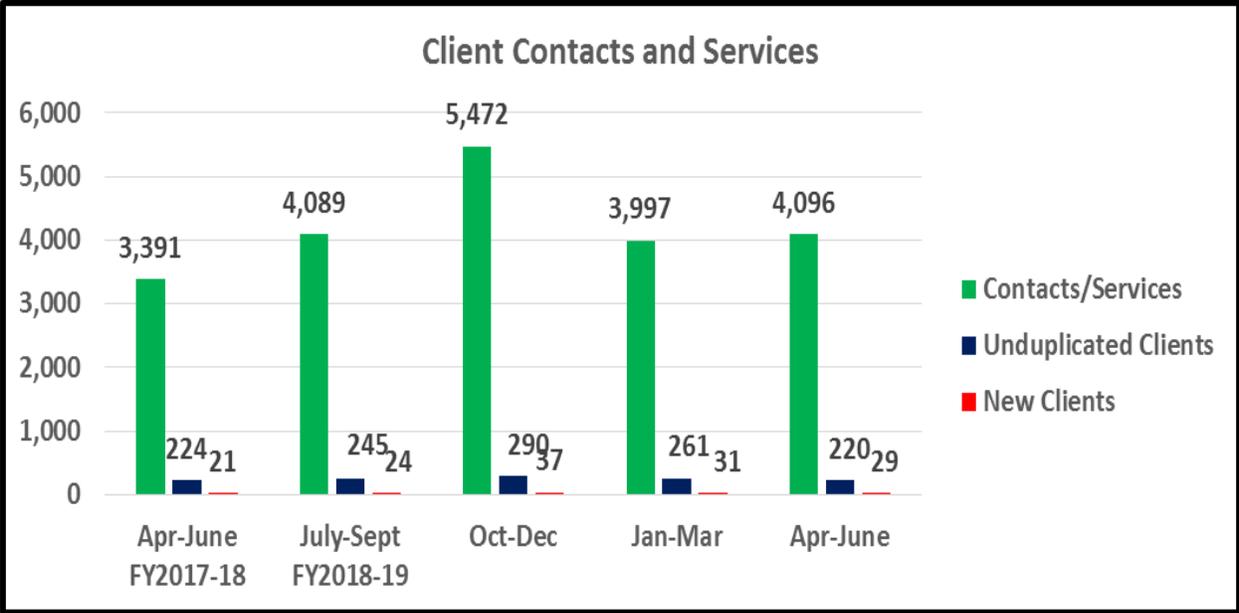
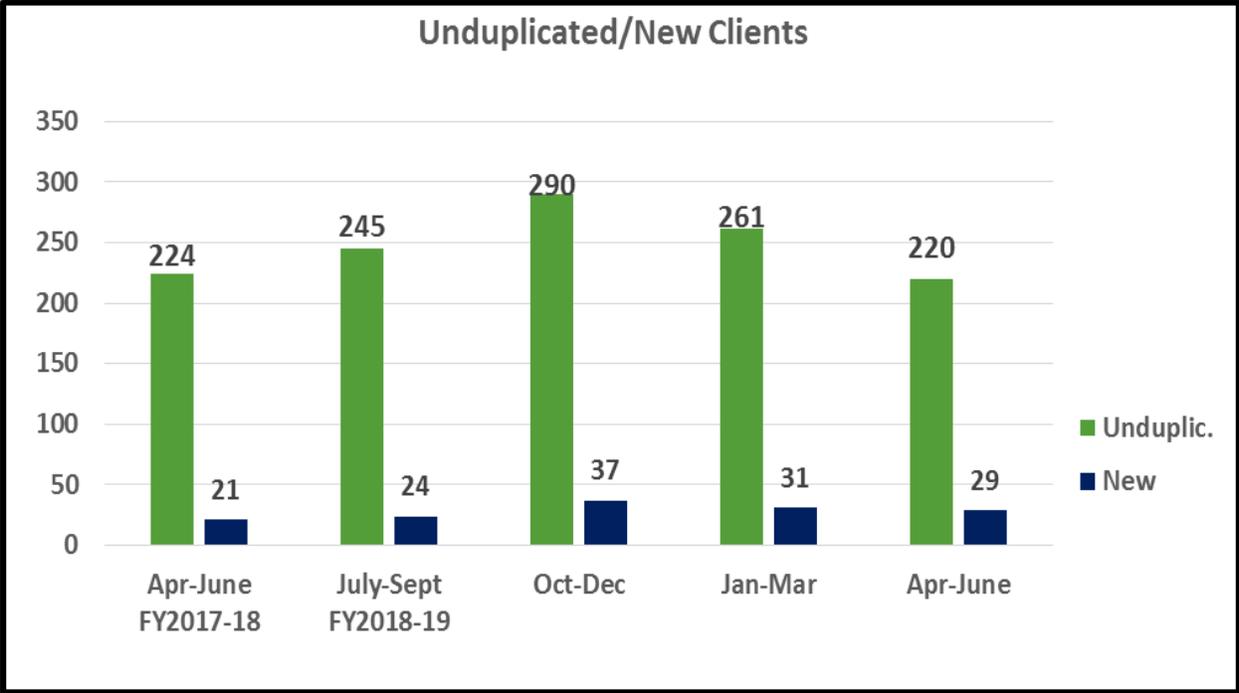
- Hindley School's PTO generously donated ride and game tickets to the Hindley Happening again this year. A total of 13 families were able to attend free of charge. The families were all very appreciative.
- We have had multiple complex client cases involving seniors again this quarter. The clients each had cognitive impairment and were referred to us by the Darien Police. Ultimately, the individuals were referred to Protective Services for the Elderly and one to the Mobile Crisis Team through Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.
- We continue to work with the Fire Marshall's office to monitor our ongoing Hoarding cases.
- We continue to hold monthly gatherings at the Mather Center for the residents of Old Town Hall Homes who have been relocated due to the construction. The residents find these meetings very supportive and look forward to reconnecting with their old neighbors.
- Beth Paris, Director of Senior Center, Gina Blum, Director of At Home in Darien, and Ali meet monthly to discuss matters pertaining to seniors and our mutual departments. Collaboratively, we provide a wonderful safety net for our seniors.
- If Human Services involvement is warranted, we work with the Blight Committee and the Blight Officer, Nick Jossem, on blighted properties. We provide support to the residents of these properties (seniors, low income or hoarding situations in particular).
- There was one eviction this quarter.
- "Ask a Social Worker" continues weekly at the Senior Center on Thursdays at 11:00 am. Cynthia or Ali are available to meet with Darien seniors for an hour every week.
- We continue to work closely with the school social workers and guidance departments to assist families in need.
- We continue to provide support and counseling to clients with serious mental health issues and their families.

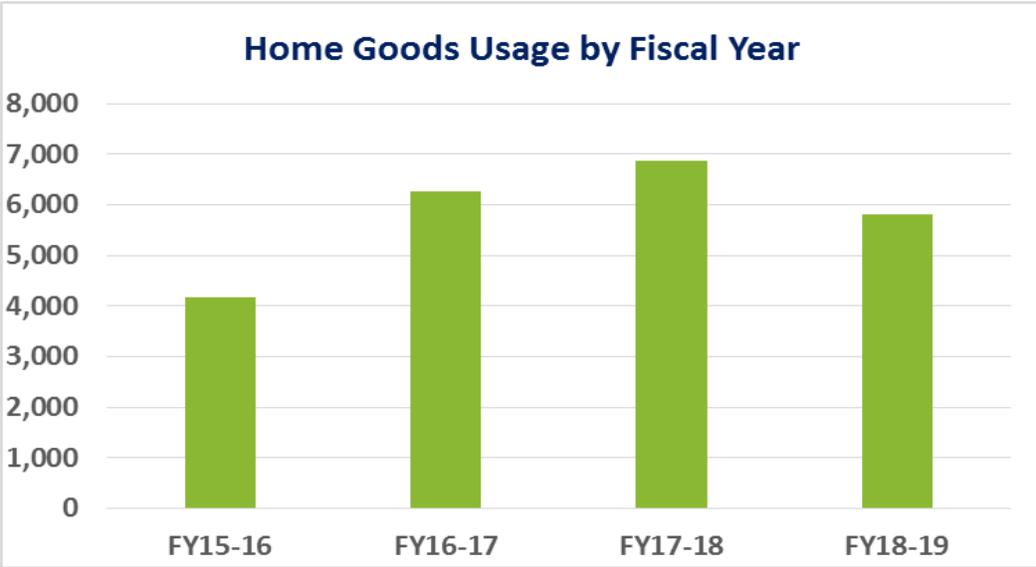
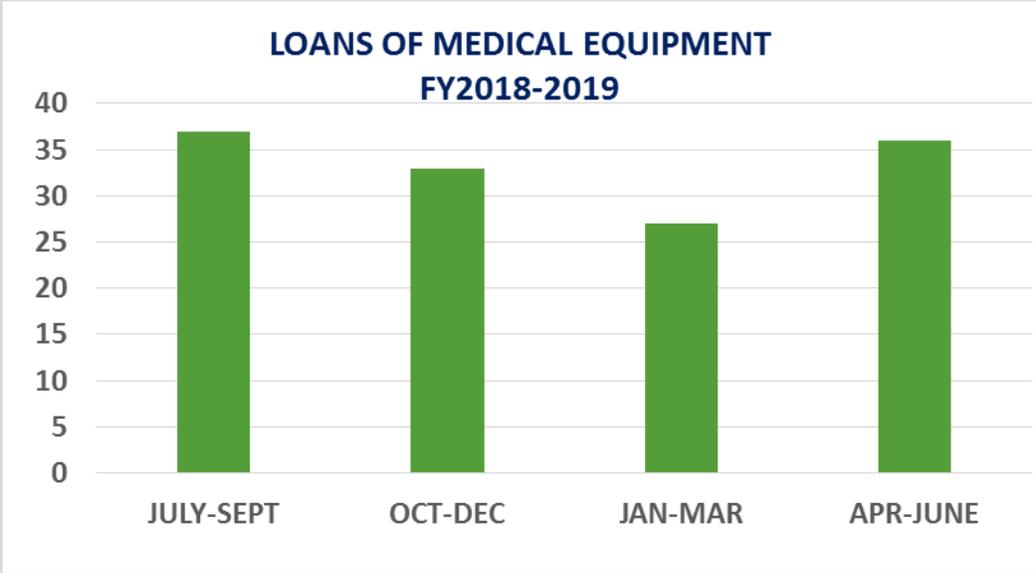
Social Service Minutes/Client



Support Staff Minutes/Client







Community Involvement:

- Human Services Planning Council, Ali Ramsteck and Cynthia Hall, members
- At Home in Darien, Ali Ramsteck, ex-officio; Diane Barston, Board member
- Commission on Aging, Ali Ramsteck, ex-officio
- Blight Review Board, Ali Ramsteck, ex-officio
- Darien/New Canaan Unit of Salvation Army
 - Ali Ramsteck, Community Representative and Co-Chair
 - Joan Davey, member and statistician
 - Cynthia Hall and Diane Barston, members
- Thriving Youth Task Force, Ali Ramsteck and Cynthia Hall, members
- Darien Domestic Abuse Council, Ali Ramsteck and Cynthia Hall, members
- CHOICES, Ali Ramsteck and Cynthia Hall, certified counselors
- Municipal Agent on Aging, Ali Ramsteck
- State of Connecticut Municipal Veteran Service Representative, Ali Ramsteck
- CLASS (Connecticut Local Administrators of Social Services), Ali Ramsteck member
- Community Action Agency of Western Connecticut, Ali Ramsteck, Board of Directors
- Small Town Directors of Human Services, Ali Ramsteck

Respectfully submitted,

Ali Ramsteck, LCSW, Director