
DARIEN SENIOR PROGRAMS

At the Mather Center



Mon-Friday
9:00 AM-3:00 PM

2 Renshaw Road
203-656-7490

Darien Senior Programs at the Mather Center

The mission of Darien Senior Programs at the Mather Center is to nurture the physical, intellectual and social well-being of the senior community aged 55 or better by providing a comprehensive and coordinated system of services that enhance individual lives, promote well-being, dignity and independence throughout the aging process and keep members connected and integrated into the community by collaborating with other agencies and organizations who provide support programs and social services to seniors, thereby enhancing the independence and wholesome lifestyle for seniors in Darien. You can find a full schedule of our classes and programs as well as our newsletter on line at www.darienct.gov or stop by between 9:00 AM. and 3:00 PM. to pick up a newsletter. We can be reached by phone at 203-656-7490. We look forward to seeing you!

Elizabeth Paris, Gerontologist
Director

Caitlin Stote, M.Ed.
Senior Program Specialist

Please See Monthly Newsletter for Program Dates & Times

Exercise Classes

Aerobics • Lisa Brehio-Robinson • \$4/class

Lisa is a Certified Nutritional Health Counselor as well as an ACE Personal Trainer and certified Group Fitness Instructor. The class will be a 45-minute aerobics class. Chairs, weights, and bands will all be incorporated in the class. All exercises will be done to fun music of the 50's and 60's. There will be a guided warm up and stretching at the end of class.

Ballet for Beginners • Elizabeth Hall • \$4/class

Class is scheduled as needed

This 6-week class is for absolute beginner ballet students. We will do barre exercises and center floor dancing in this 45 minute class. All set to beautiful ballet class music, you will learn basic steps, terminology, and of course, all of this improves your core, posture, and memory.

Ballet • Elizabeth Hall \$4/class

Why take ballet at Darien Senior Programs? Did you ever want to dance but were intimidated to go to a ballet class? This class is for you; it's a ballet class for seniors. Besides being swept away by beautiful classical movement, you are doing your body and spirit a favor. The balance, strength, and memory you once thought were waning will only get stronger. Yes, you can increase all of these things while still having fun dancing. This is a safe and stress free environment.

Cardio Drumming • Elizabeth Hall • \$4/class

If you like moving to the music and the rhythm of the beat, this class is for you. Cardio Drumming utilizes drum sticks, a big ball and bucket. Classes are choreographed.

Chair Dance • Claudia DeVita • \$4/class

Claudia DeVita is a professional dance instructor and choreographer.

This 40-minute class includes stretching, light aerobic exercise, creative dance, and movement choreographed to all genres of music. You will leave this highly motivating class with enhanced posture, renewed energy, and a positive attitude.

Chair Yoga • Mary Ann Freeman • \$4/class

Mary Ann Freeman holds a 200-hr RYT Yoga Alliance certification, Yin Yoga certification, and Level 1 & 2 Reiki healing. Chair yoga is perfect for seniors who have difficulty getting on the ground or with limited mobility. The class is taught on chairs while using classic modified yoga poses. Chair yoga helps to increase flexibility and strength, improves balance, and helps reduce stress.

Monthly Mindfulness & Meditation for Stress Management and Everyday Living**Monica Keady • No Charge**

Monica Keady, registered Yoga Teacher, will help members apply the principles and practices of Yogic Meditation, Western Psychology, Buddhist teachings, and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction. This class is for everyone—no prior experience needed. Members leave with renewed energy and tools to practice Mindfulness at home.

Senior Chair Fitness • Elizabeth Hall • \$4/class

It's important to stay active as we get older. Regular exercise – including sit exercise, slows the loss of bone density and muscle tissue associated with aging. Working out also improves balance and flexibility, reducing the risk of fall or injury. Seniors can stay fit and active through utilizing a set of no impact exercises, requiring nothing more than a chair. These movements are suited for any age, and any level of fitness. Elizabeth holds a BA in Literature and Dance from Hunter College. She is a certified ballet teacher with International Crestar, Singapore. She is certified in personal fitness, yoga, and aerobics.

Sit and Stand Dance • Claudia DeVita • \$4/class

Highly motivating music will carry you away as you warm up, moving into light aerobics and then learning basic strengthening exercises using light weights. This dance-based workout offers a complete body/mind approach ending with a cool down and full body stretch.

Sittercise • Winifred Lom • No charge

If you have limited mobility or you have a disability, you might find it hard to stay fit. It could be a challenge to use regular gym equipment, or you may not be able to physically cope with the usual ways in which people exercise. It is important to keep fit and healthy in order to keep medical problems at bay and also to keep your weight

down. Sittercise is a program that could help you remain fit with the aid of a chair. Many different types of movements can be performed from a seated position. Although it is not possible to reach the same intensity as you would with a regular activity, you can still burn fat and increase muscle tone and body strength. Winifred has been an instructor at Darien Senior Programs for 15+ years; she holds an MS in Occupational Therapy from Columbia University.

Slow Flow Yoga • Whitney Coccaro • \$4/class

Whitney Coccaro is a Saraswati-certified yoga teacher. If you are interested in improving your balance, flexibility, stability and strength as well as working on your sense of well-being, this is the class for you! Slow Flow Yoga will incorporate a variety of slow paced, measured movements that will involve sitting and standing on a yoga mat while being guided through the postures. These movements paired with a focus on breathing will help you to calm the senses and reconnect with your body. No experience necessary! Students must bring their own mats.

Strength Aerobics • Lisa Franke • \$4/class

Jill Franke is certified through AFAA, Athletics and Fitness Association of America as a Personal Trainer and Group Exercise Instructor. She also holds spinning, Pilates, barre ballet, and Reiki certifications. She's been training and working with seniors since the 1980's. 45-minute class: 30 minutes of low impact aerobics slowly getting your heart rate up. 15 minutes of strengthening with light weights and stretching.

Tai Chi • Ken Dolan • \$4/class

Ken Dolan began studying Tai Chi and Qigong in 1996. He has been teaching regularly scheduled Tai Chi/Qigong classes in the Stamford-Greenwich area for 13 years as well as private sessions. He also co-teaches a stress management class for the Bennett Cancer Center. His classes emphasize relaxing with focused breathing and coordinated movement. The practice of both the breathing and the movement usually relaxes both mind and body.

Art Classes

Advanced Watercolor & Acrylic • Nobu Miki • \$4/class

Since moving to Darien with her family in 2003, Nobu has become one of the most recognizable artists in the area. Nobu's scenes of Darien and New Canaan have been featured in public shows. She has designed the cover of the Darien Parks and Recreation Department brochure since 2008, and many local nonprofits have used her works to raise money. Students of intermediate to advanced levels are asked to come join this class for critique by Nobu. Please come with canvas, paints, and brushes.

Beginner Acrylic • Joseph Fama • Preregistered 6-Week Course (seasonal)

Beginners learn the painting process with simple step-by-step exercises. Learn the basics with black & white paintings of a still life and landscape. Study the three primary colors and move on to full color painting in landscapes. Special attention devoted to "Power of Observation" and "Select Focus" and how to use these principles in landscape painting. Students will receive individual critiques and class demonstrations.

Community Knitting

The group will be knitting items to be given to the Darien Human Services. The Human Services department receives handmade items and gives them to people in need of a bit of support. Patterns, yarn, and needles will be provided to make knitted scarves, caps, and mittens for both children and adults, but if you happen to have circular size 7 needles please bring them along! Any time and contribution is greatly appreciated. Every small contribution adds up.

Crafting with Rene Soto • \$5/class

In this monthly class, local multimedia artist, Rene Soto, will lead participants in an abstract, creative art project using all types of medium. Rene trained with Greenwich Arts Society, and his work was exhibited in many galleries and museums.

Mixed-Level Watercolor • Elizabeth Linehan

Volunteer teacher, Elizabeth Linehan, studied drawing, painting, and sculpture at Siena Heights University. This free-of-charge class, is open to any students who would like to receive watercolor critique by Elizabeth Linehan. Please bring your own supplies.

Pleasure through Plants Garden Club of Darien

Volunteers with the Garden Club of Darien's Pleasure through Plants program come monthly October through May to host a wonderful cut flower arranging group. Flowers are generously donated by the Nielsen's Florist. Participants will finish with a beautiful arrangement to bring home free of charge.

Stained Glass • Volunteer Led

In stained glass class, students will learn how to cut plain glass, use tools to create straight and curved cuts and then progress to color glass. Class participants will learn to work with glasscutters, two types of pliers, grinders, glass saw, copper foil and solder.

Discussion Groups

Darien Senior Programs Book Group

Once a month, members meet to discuss a book curated by the Darien Library Reader Advisors. Books are picked up at Darien Library a month in advance.

Reminisce with Rosie and Genovese

A fun and invigorating discussion group lead by Rosie & Geri Genovese monthly. For those of you who do not know, Rosie is our favorite pet visitor to DSP! She brings Geri Genovese along and together, they offer wonderful topics for reminiscing. There are so many benefits of interaction with pets – mental, emotional, and even physical.

Writing Club

Writing class meets once a week. The goal of the class is to encourage and motivate each member to "put it in writing." The group meets to write and read personal works. Each participant is encouraged to write in the style they find most comfortable.

Educational Classes

Beginner French • Hendrik Vriesen • \$4/class

Did you take French in college or high school and wish you continued? This class will remind you of the basics and reawaken the French that went dormant in your mind. Hendrik Vriesen is a multilingual international traveler and retired banker—he brings a wealth of knowledge to his French class.

Computer Basics for Beginners

This monthly class is for beginners; mouse and keyboard skills are not required! Mary Beth Mason, Knowledge & Learning Services Librarian, Darien Public Library, will help students learn basic skills such as browsing the internet safely, opening applications and setting up email.

Intermediate Spanish • Luz Rincon • \$5/class

Do you already know a little Spanish and want to learn more? Our Spanish class is designed for those who want to learn and practice Spanish in a relaxed environment with other students. Luz will focus on vocabulary and understanding the language at the intermediate and advanced level. Spanish is offered once a week.

Italian Conversation & Culture • Joseph Tarzia • \$4/class

Italian class is a perfect introduction for newcomers to the Italian language. Joe will teach basic vocabulary with an emphasis on speaking, conversing, and understanding the language. Italian is offered once a week.

Tech Help by Appointment

Monthly librarians from Darien Library will take appointments to help senior members with their iPad, iPhone, and computer questions.

Lectures

Historical & Mental Health Series

Art Gottlieb, LCSW, CSAM

This series highlights how events, individuals, cultures and technology impact the course of history. Art Gottlieb, LCSW, CSA will present a fact-filled PowerPoint program. This series will also focus on the architecture of notable structures, icons of transportation and public work projects, the naval architecture of famous ships, as well as the design history of other items of historical significance.

In addition to history, as a licensed social worker, Art presents various topics that are relevant to the mental health of the aging population.

Historical Series

Mark Albertson

Mark is an historical research editor at *Army Aviation* magazine and is the historian for the Army Aviation Association of America. Mark is a longtime member of the United States Naval Institute. He has authored several books: *USS Connecticut: Constitution*

State Battleship; They'll Have to Follow You! The Triumph of the Great White Fleet, and *On History: A Treatise*. Mark presents various, well-researched historical topics.

Urban Archeology

Greg Von Antwerp

Local history hunter, Greg Von Antwerp, has been searching the basements and attics of New York and New England for something more valuable than gold— a good story. Along the way, he has documented his success into presentations that features the humorous, poignant, unique and historically important. Greg wants to raise awareness for the local history that is sold or tossed each weekend.

Additional monthly specials with visiting academics.

Games

Brain Twisters and Teasers

Beth Paris, Gerontologist

Mind games for seniors and mentally stimulating leisure activities have been shown to help maintain cognitive abilities as people age. Along with reducing the risk of dementia, research suggests that playing mind games can help promote brain health and strengthen critical thinking. Beth will host an hour long, weekly brain twister and teasers group.

Bingo

We will play 10 cents a card per game with a final blackout round. Check your couch cushions and your coat pockets and join the fun! We will not be able to make any change for participants, so please come prepared to play!

Chess Club

Chess club is a new volunteer-led club. Chess sets are provided and players of all-levels are invited to come with a friend to play.

Cribbage

Cribbage is a simple two-person card game. Beginners are welcome to come try it out and learn from our experienced members.

Cornhole

Today many people play corn hole to relax and unwind. It is a game anyone can play and has many physical benefits. The Basic Cornhole rules are available as well as the scoring rules. We ask, if possible, that each group set up and take down the set. The floor in room 209 will be marked to help designate the optimal spot for each target!

Mahjong

Open mahjong games are available. Please see Newsletter for details.

Table Tennis

Table tennis is a great mental and physical workout. Bring a friend and try it out.

Services

***AARP Safe Driving Course 4x per year**

The AARP Smart Driver™ Course is the nation's first and largest refresher course for drivers age 50 and older. It has given millions of drivers the skills and tools they need to drive safely on today's roads, allowing them to remain independent for many years to come. Learn about normal age-related physical changes and how to adjust your driving to compensate. Reduce your chances of receiving a traffic violation, getting into an accident, or becoming injured. See Newsletter for dates, this program is offered four times a year.

Blood Pressure Screening and Health Counseling

Waveny Life Care Network and Visiting Nurse & Hospice team provides a bimonthly blood pressure screening done by a registered nurse. Blood pressure screening will be held in the wellness room.

Caregivers Support Group

Elizabeth Paris, Gerontologist

Caregiver support group can offer you an opportunity to find out more about available community resources, learn from others who are going through similar experiences and obtain additional educational materials. Through participation in a caregiver support group, you will become better prepared and perhaps feel less devastated as your loved one's condition becomes worse. You also may be able to find some hope, from seeing that others who have been caring longer have survived the caregiving experience. Beth is a trained Alzheimer's Association support group facilitator and Gerontologist. Caregiver support groups meet monthly unless otherwise noted, and without a fee.

Coffee with a Cop

Coffee with a Cop brings police officers and the community members they serve together over coffee – to discuss issues and learn more about each other. Please join us for a cup and some conversation. Coffee with a Cop provides a comfortable opportunity for positive officer-citizen engagements.

Darien Human Services at Mather Center

Darien Human Services offers a variety of services and supports to the residents of Darien. The staff has a wide range of experience and training in the area of Human Services and is available to assist residents either by phone, e-mail or in their office at Town Hall. Please call for more information or to make an appointment at 203-656-7328.

Medicare Choice Counseling

October-December

During open enrollment, an experienced Medicare Choices Counselor from Southwestern CT Area Agency on Aging can evaluate your current plan, review other plan options for cost-savings and make changes.

Woodshop Donation Program

Woodshop volunteers will repair small wood items, chairs, drawers, tables, etc., with a minimum charge. One of our volunteers will discuss the cost to repair including supplies.

Health and Wellness

A Matter of Balance with Fairfield University School of Nursing

Falls are the primary cause of injury in Connecticut's older adults. Fairfield University School of Nursing hosts eight weekly two-hour sessions on fall prevention methods with focus on reducing participants' risk for falling. This program is offered January-April. The program will help participants set goals for increasing physical activity, and teach exercises to increase strength and balance. The program has proven to increase confidence in the management and prevention of falls. There is significant evidence that fall prevention programs can decrease the rate of falls in older adults.

Community Healthcare Provider Outreach • Monthly

Doctors, nurse practitioners, psychologists, and physical therapists from Stamford Health, Norwalk Hospital-Nuvance Health, Hospital for Special Surgery, and other local centers provide health lectures, workshops, and Q&A's for our seniors.

Government Updates from Southwestern CT Area Agency on Aging

Throughout the year, representatives from Southwestern CT Area on Aging will provide updates on Medicare and Medicaid eligibility for seniors.

Waveny Presents

Monthly, Christine Burns, RN, of Waveny Life Care Network and Visiting Nurse & Hospice presents a health topic relevant to the senior population.

Volunteers

Darien Senior Programs is looking for volunteers to perform data entry, greet at the Reception Desk, help with the lunch service, assist with other various ad hoc projects and events, or teach a class. Areas of interest are: history, current events, short story discussions, travelogue and technology. Sharing your time, talents, and interest is a wonderful way to gift your community and continue to enrich your life! Please contact Beth Paris or Caitlin Stote to fill out an application and discuss your ideas and availability at 203-656-7490.

Lunch Program

Hot, nutritious meals are served 5 days a week in our lunchroom. Lunch reservations can be made via phone or in person a week in advance. Our menu is posted Fridays on our website.

Monthly Newsletter - *Highlights & Happenings*

The Newsletter is full of special programs as well as our regular weekly program and services schedule. Be sure to pick up one at the end of every previous month so you

don't miss the opportunity to sign up. The newsletter is available on our website, click on department and services then click on Senior Center to view. Hard copies of the newsletters are also available at the Mather Center and Town Hall in the Information area

Constant Contact

For those who subscribe to our email list, a weekly email highlighting the following week's events and notifications will be sent out.

Facebook

Darien Senior Programs also has a Facebook page, which features pictures from past events and advertisements for future events.



Special Events and Additional Programs

Entertainment programs are held frequently throughout the year, as well as additional educational and intergenerational programs. Please be sure to pick up a monthly newsletter for all our additional special programs!

Just a few examples of organizations and entertainments that come to the Senior Program:

- AARP
- Airborne Entertainment
- Alumni Swing Band
- Alzheimer's Association
- Blue Notes
- Connecticut Humanities
- David Stein, Music Therapist
- Darien Health Department
- Darien High School Core Group
- Darien Police
- Darien Probate Court
- Fairfield University School of Nursing
- Family and Children's Aid
- Garden Club of Darien
- Hospital for Special Surgery
- Jim Clark
- Lynn Academy of Irish Dance
- Overasy, Trio Band
- Post 53
- Public Utilities Regulatory Agency
- Sacred Heart University OT
- Stamford Healthcare Lectures
- Steven Avitable Entertainment
- SWCAA – South West CT Area Agency on Aging
- Waveny Life Care Network and Visiting Nurse & Hospice Team