

## **At Home In Darien Gets a Better Van, The Darien Foundation Writes the Check**

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At Home In Darien, an organization that helps seniors in town, now has a wheelchair-accessible van, paid for with an \$82,880 grant from The Darien Foundation.

— *an announcement from* [The Darien Foundation](#) *and* [At Home In Darien](#)

“We are incredibly grateful to The Darien Foundation for this amazing new van and for their continued support and generosity,” said Gina Blum, executive director of At Home In Darien.

The 2021 Toyota Sienna van is meant to provide users with a safer, more secure ride, according to the foundation. By getting older Darien residents from place to place, the service helps them avoid isolation.

“We know that transportation is one of the biggest hindrances people face as they try to retain their independence, Blum said. “This will enable us to help even more people within our community.”

The van was bought from BraunAbility, a manufacturer of wheelchair accessible vans and wheelchair lifts after At Home in Darien did some research into what was needed.

"Not only does the new van have the latest features, which will provide a more comfortable ride for our disabled residents and seniors, it is also a hybrid/fuel-efficient model that is attractive and discreet so that passengers may ride with dignity,” Blum said.

The van is outfitted with new handicap technology features, including a side vs. rear entry ramp, which “kneels down” to offer a moderate incline with which to load a wheelchair.

The side ramp makes it easier for passengers dependent on walkers, canes, crutches and other mobility aids to enter the vehicle.

The van also has a ratcheting system allowing a wheelchair to be securely attached in the center instead of the rear of the vehicle. There is plenty of seating space for an caregiver to sit next to the passenger.

The vehicle's interior is high enough for the driver to stand up, making it easier for the driver to maneuver and secure the wheelchair.

“Darien is enriched by being a multigenerational community, said Sarah Woodberry, executive director of the foundation. “We are thrilled to partner with AHID again to support this initiative to benefit seniors and special needs residents in Darien. At Home In Darien has been a lifeline for many in our community, especially during the pandemic.”

This van is the second vehicle that The Darien Foundation has funded for AHID. In 2015 the foundation also provided \$46,700 for a custom Chrysler 300 sedan and for tracking and other technology to support the program.

The new van can be reserved by calling At Home In Darien, and riders can expect AHID's drivers to be friendly and professional, Blum said. “We hope that more residents reach out to us so that they can stay connected to the community.”

### **About At Home In Darien**

At Home In Darien (AHID) is a local nonprofit organization that offers help to seniors and disabled residents, enabling them to stay independent with dignity and a connection to the community while living at home.

In addition to offering grocery shopping, household, and errand services, the organization provides free transportation to over 500 seniors and disabled residents, with about 4,000 rides, annually.

### **About At Home in Darien**

At Home In Darien is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization whose mission is to help older adults in Darien to live independently, comfortably and with dignity in their own homes for as long as possible.

For more information about At Home In Darien, call 203.655.2227 or visit: [www.athomeindarien.org](http://www.athomeindarien.org).

### **About The Darien Foundation**

Since 1998, [The Darien Foundation](#) has awarded over \$5 million in grants for technology and capital initiatives to create opportunity for Darien's youth, support the town's safety and security services and enhance the overall quality of life in town.

The Board of Directors — which reflect the many constituencies of Darien — evaluates grant requests and assists grant recipients in achieving their goals. Public donations are directed to supporting grants awarded by The Darien Foundation, as all operating costs have been funded by Board member and Officer contributions.

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The Darien Foundation recently awarded grants to Abilis, the Darien Heritage Trail for the Bicentennial, Corbin Cares, Darien Arts Center, Darien Public Schools, DAF Media, EMS-Post 53, The Depot Youth Center, Person-to-Person and STAR, Inc.