

TOWN OF DARIEN
HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT
2 RENSHAW ROAD
DARIEN CT 06820
TELEPHONE: 203-656-7328
FAX: 203-656-7486



ALEXANDRA RAMSTECK, LCSW
DIRECTOR
aramsteck@darienct.gov

CYNTHIA HALL, LMSW
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
chall@darienct.gov

Department of Human Services
Quarterly Report
January 2022 through March 2022

Quarter Highlights:

- ✓ Influx of new clients, 27 this quarter
- ✓ Dramatic increase in clients requesting rental assistance
- ✓ ARPA committee funds for Human Services related needs

Administration and Programs

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Throughout the COVID 19 pandemic mental health issues and food insecurity has been on the rise. The Human Services Department proposed that some ARPA funds be allocated to these causes. We have been collaborating with many local non-profits throughout the pandemic, which has been crucial for the well-being of some of our most vulnerable residents. The following amounts were approved:

- Mental Health Support: \$250,000
- Food Insecurity Support: \$100,000
- Non-profits Support: \$100,000
- Emergency Financial Assistance: \$75,000

Vaccine Boosters

For the duration of the Health Department's vaccine clinics, Ali was the Town contact person for homebound residents. Ali arranged and accompanied Paula Sutcliffe, RN, Public Health Nurse to administer the vaccine to homebound residents. The residents and their families were extremely grateful for this service.

Sustainable CT

Human Services has been collaborating with Cliff Van Voorhees of the Sustainability Committee on the town's recertification application. The Action we have been a part of is: *Action 12: Effective, Compassionate Homelessness Prevention*. Ali took the seminar "My Town Cares: Local Efforts to Address and Prevent Homelessness" and participated in meetings with The Housing Collective and Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness, along with Cliff.

Ali was designated as the town liaison for homelessness prevention in accordance with the Sustainable CT requirements. The emergency financial assistance and benefits programs the Human Services Department provides are essentially assisting residents in preventing homelessness.

Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

There is still time to apply for 2021-2022 Energy Assistance Program for residents who heat with electric, gas or propane. The deadline to apply is May 19, 2022. This program helps supplement energy costs for struggling residents. Income limits apply. The 2022 income limit for a single person household is \$39,027, for a family of 4 people it is \$75,052. So far this season we have submitted 57 applications for a total of \$29,840 in grants. Last season a total of 68 households received grants totaling \$34,119.95.

Operation Fuel

Operation Fuel is a private program that grants qualified individuals up to \$500 once every 12 months for their heating or utility bills. The 2021-2022 Winter program began on December 6, 2021 and we were allocated \$6,000 for this season. So far we have submitted 7 applications totaling \$3,966.95. For the summer and winter programs of 2020-2021 a total of 23 households received grants totaling \$11,877.32.

Medical Loan Closet

The Medical Loan closet continues to be a great resource for Darien residents for short term loans of wheelchairs, knee scooters, walkers, crutches and canes. Twenty residents used the loan closet this past quarter. The feedback from residents is positive and they appreciate this convenient resource.

Home Goods Closet

This quarter we provided home goods to 124 residents a combination of families and seniors. We are grateful to various schools and organizations that have hosted drives for us throughout the year to supply our closet. This is a very helpful service to our low income clients.

Filling in the Blanks

Filling in the Blanks is a local non-profit organization that provides food on the weekends to school aged children who may have food insecurity. We currently have 18 households, totaling 36 students receiving weekend meals. Pick up of the meals is scheduled for every other week. The families are very appreciative of the assistance.

Case Management

- We had a total of 27 new clients this quarter, compared to 9 in the previous quarter.
- We work closely with Protective Services for the Elderly when they have a referral for a Darien resident.
- When warranted, we continue to call the 83 residents on our Emergency Call List when there is a town-wide emergency or weather related emergency. We made one outreach call for a snowstorm this quarter. The seniors on the list find it very comforting and reassuring to receive these calls.
- We continue to work with the Fire Marshal's office to monitor ongoing Hoarding cases.
- If Human Services involvement is warranted, we work with the Blight Committee and the Blight Officer, Bob Sollitto, on blighted properties. We provide support to the residents of these properties (seniors, low income or hoarding situations in particular).
- We continue to work closely with the school social workers and guidance departments to assist students/families in need.
- We continue to provide support and counseling to clients with serious mental health issues and their families.

Conferences and Meetings

- Ali continues to participate in monthly zoom meetings with the Small Town Directors of Human Services. This is a tremendous resource to all who participate.
- Silver Hill Hospital Virtual Grand Rounds: Substance Use Disorders: Explained and Treated through Attachment Theory, Ali and Cynthia attended.
- Silver Hill Hospital Virtual Grand Rounds: The Big Six Treatments for Personality Disorders; Commonalities and Differences, Ali and Cynthia attended.
- Silver Hill Hospital Virtual Grand Rounds: Integrative Approaches to Assessing and Treating the Suicidal Patient, Ali and Cynthia attended.
- Silver Hill Hospital Virtual Grand Rounds: New Thoughts about Anorexia Nervosa and its Treatment, Cynthia attended.
- Silver Hill Hospital Virtual Grand Rounds: Psychiatrist/Therapist Reactions to Patient Suicide, Ali attended.
- Doing It Your Way: Empowerment Through Planning, Cynthia attended.
- Caring for Older Loved Ones, Cynthia attended.
- Current State of Children's Mental Health, Ali attended.
- Understanding the DSM-5, Ali attended.
- DEMHS Region 1, Long Term COVID-19 Recovery, Ali attended.
- My Town Cares: Local Efforts to Address and Prevent Homelessness, Ali attended.

Community Involvement:

- At Home in Darien, Ali Ramsteck, ex-officio
- Commission on Aging, Ali Ramsteck, ex-officio
- Blight Review Board, Ali Ramsteck, ex-officio
- Human Services Planning Council, Ali Ramsteck and Cynthia Hall, 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
- Small Town Directors of Human Services, Ali Ramsteck member
- Southwestern Connecticut Agency on Aging Advisory Board, Ali Ramsteck member
- Abilis/Darien YMCA Project SEARCH Steering Committee, Ali Ramsteck member
- American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) Committee, Ali Ramsteck member
- Sustainable CT designated town liaison on homelessness prevention, Ali Ramsteck

YEAR ROUND PROGRAMS

	FY22 - Q1 - July-Sept				FY22 - Q2 - Oct-Dec				FY22 - Q3 - Jan-March								
	Interactions		Minutes		Interactions		Minutes		Interactions		Minutes						
	Sen/Ind	Families	SW	Admin	Sen/Ind	Families	SW	Admin	Sen/Ind	Families	SW	Admin					
Benefits (Medical, SNAP, ect)	7	4	570		30	4	1710	90	31	5	730	35					
Emergency Call List	194		120	240					80	3	280	140					
Evictions	1	4	495	30	1		805			1	60						
Filling in the Blanks		139	210	1280		26		636		122	250	1260					
Finance	2	7	365		1	29	215	335	10	24	600						
Home Goods Closet	32	59	215	1155	21	43	295	1195	16	23	215	1380					
Home Visits	11	2			10	7			16	1							
Homecare	4	1	260		4		270		6		155						
Housing	5	10	385		5	4	270	15	2	6	210						
Info & Referrals	12	20	905	45	7	1	65	185	2	11	340						
Medical	11		830		9	3	1455	135	8	11	225						
Loan Closet	30	4	145	405	7	15	60	330	4	16		375					
Outreach	12	7	545		3	7	240		6	2	105						
Protective Services/Police	3	1	855		2		155		12	3	615						
Support & Counseling	22	12	1660		11	15	1900		33	30	2195						
	TOTAL: 7,560				3,155				7,440				2,921		5,980		3,190

SEASONAL PROGRAMS

	FY22 - Q1 - July-Sept				FY22 - Q2 - Oct-Dec				FY22 - Q3 - Jan-March								
	Interactions		Minutes		Interactions		Minutes		Interactions		Minutes						
	Sen/Ind	Families	SW	Admin	Sen/Ind	Families	SW	Admin	Sen/Ind	Families	SW	Admin					
Back to School		59	1780	750													
Energy Assistance	13	14	860	15	34	28	4345	285	35	43	1500	75					
Renter's Rebate	31	3	2750	10	6		155			2	30						
Seniors Farmers Market	38		100	490													
Thanksgiving					40	49	150	1310									
Holiday					44	45	4050	2640									
	TOTAL: 5,490				1,265				8,700				4,235		1,530		75

Quarter Four:

- Mental Health Awareness Outreach/Programs
- Renter's Rebate Program
- Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program

Quarter One FY23:

- Back to School
- Energy Assistance

Respectfully submitted,
Ali Ramsteck, LCSW, Director