



TOWN OF DARIEN NEWSLETTER

November 23, 2022 - Issue 19

MESSAGE FROM MONICA MCNALLY

November 23, 2022

Dear Darienites,

During the last two weeks, I have had the honor of participating in two very special events. On November 10th an “Annual Celebration of Service” was held to honor all Darien Town and Police Department employees. Special recognition went to several employees with milestone years of service: Angela Clark, 30 years; and Geoff Gilbert and Mark McEwan, each serving 25 years. Their long-term commitment to serving the Town of Darien is impressive and is worthy of public recognition.



On November 16th, I, along with other Town employees, had the pleasure of helping to serve a special Thanksgiving meal to over 90 seniors at the Mather Center. We are truly thankful for the spirit of our robust senior community and enjoyed celebrating the holiday with them.



Now that the Holiday Season has officially begun, I’m looking forward to seeing you at the various Holiday events throughout Darien, highlighted below.

Finally, in recognition of Thanksgiving, I’d like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for my fellow Selectmen, our Town employees, and all the volunteers serving on boards and commissions. I’m also grateful for all the residents that support our local businesses throughout the year and particularly during the holiday season. November 26th is Small Business Saturday and it’s the perfect day to embrace the Darien retail community and thank our local shop owners for supporting our residents, youth teams, and charitable fundraisers.

Please continue to keep in contact with me with your thoughts, questions, and concerns.

Happy Thanksgiving,

Monica

DATES & INFORMATION

UPCOMING MEETINGS

RTM PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY

11.28.22 7:00 PM

RTM

11.28.22 8:00 PM

PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

11.28.22 7:30 PM

HHR BUILDING COMMITTEE

11.30.22 6:00 PM

POLICE COMMISSION

12.1.22 4:00 PM

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

12.5.22 7:00 PM

SEWER COMMISSION

12.6.22 4:30 PM

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMISSION

12.7.22 7:00 PM

This is not a complete list of meetings. The entire meeting schedule of all Boards and Commissions is available [here](#).

SPIRIT OF THE SEASON

Darien Parks and Recreation is collaborating with the Darien Chamber of Commerce, the Darien Sport Shop, and others to bring back Darien's "Spirit of the Season." The events commence November 25th with the Festival O' Wreaths and last through December 21st. The 44th Annual Tree Lighting will be held outside the Darien Sports Shop on Sunday, November 27th, at 4:00 PM (shhhh...Santa will arrive at 5:00 PM).

Mark your calendars for the Old Fashioned Holiday event on Saturday, December 10th, 2:00 – 4:00 PM at Tilley Pond Park, and the Menorah Lighting on Wednesday, December 21st at 6:00 PM, Grove Street Plaza. Detailed information on all "Spirit of the Season" events can be found on the Darien Chamber of Commerce website www.darienctchamber.com.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

Wreaths Across America is a national organization with the mission to "Remember, Honor and Teach" by coordinating wreath laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, as well as at 3,400 additional locations in all 50 states, at sea, and abroad. On December 17th at 12:00 PM, the Darien Monuments and Ceremonies Committee will be hosting a brief ceremony, followed by the adorning of graves with wreaths in Spring Grove Cemetery. All are welcome to attend and participate in the laying of wreaths.

If you would like to donate a wreath please click this [link](#). The last day to order is November 27th.

RESIDENT REMINDERS, NEWS, & TIPS

TRAIN STATION PARKING PERMITS

Thank you to residents who have finalized their parking permit renewals. As of November 23rd, all renewals are being assessed a \$50 late fee. Renewals will not be accepted after December 12th. Questions or changes regarding renewals should be emailed to Anne DiCeglie, Parking Administrator, at adiceglie@darienct.gov.

LEAF PICK-UP

The final Town leaf pickups are scheduled for November 28th, north of the railroad tracks, and Wednesday, November 30th, south of the railroad tracks. Leaves must be in 100% biodegradable

paper bags commonly found at local hardware stores, supermarkets, and big-box stores. Leaves can be dropped at the Town Recycling Center at any time of the year. The complete instructions can be viewed [here](#).

HELPFUL INFORMATION

The Darien Fire Marshals have several specific Holiday Fire Safety Tips.

TREES

- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green; needles are hard to pull from branches and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, should not lose many needles.
- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces and radiators. Because heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.

LIGHTS

- Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory, which indicates conformance with safety standards.
- Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections, and throw out damaged sets.
- Use no more than three standard-size sets of lights per single extension cord, unless the directions indicate that it is safe.
- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.
- Fasten outdoor lights securely to trees, house walls, or other firm supports to protect the lights from wind damage. Use only insulated staples, not nails or tacks, to hold strings in place. Or, run strings of lights through hooks (available at hardware stores).
- Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.
- For added electric-shock protection, plug outdoor electric lights and decorations into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Portable outdoor GFCIs can be purchased where electrical supplies are sold. GFCIs can be installed permanently to household circuits by a qualified electrician.

DECORATIONS

- Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked over.
- In homes with small children, take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children to avoid the child swallowing or inhaling small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.
- Never put wrapping paper in a fireplace. It can result in a very large fire, throwing off dangerous sparks and embers that may result in a chimney fire.

Finally, as in every season, have working smoke alarms installed on every level of your home, test them monthly and keep them clean and equipped with fresh batteries at all times.

GOVERNMENT 101

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

The construction project at the intersection of Noroton Avenue and West Avenue is approximately two-thirds complete and should be finished in December. The next steps in the project will be the road paving and the installation of the upgrade to the traffic signal.

POLICE UPDATE

Congratulations to Captain Jeremiah P. Marron Jr. who graduated from the 283rd session of the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia, on September 13, 2022. Captain Marron, Jr. is the 16th officer in Darien Police Department history (dating back to 1944) to complete this prestigious program. He joins his father, the late Darien Police Department Captain Jeremiah P. Marron, Sr., as a graduate.

Nationally, less than one percent of all law enforcement officers are selected to attend the program, which is by nomination only and subject to a stringent vetting process. To be selected to attend, participants must have a proven record as consummate professionals within their agencies, and on average have 21 years of law enforcement experience.



The National Academy offers ten weeks of advanced communication, leadership, and fitness training. The 283rd session consisted of two hundred and thirty-five law enforcement officers from forty-nine states and the District of Columbia. The class also included members of law enforcement agencies from twenty-one countries, five military organizations, and five federal and civilian agencies. Graduates usually return to their agencies to serve in executive level positions.

Captain Marron, Jr. is the Commander of the Darien Police Department Field Services Division and has served the Department with honor and distinction since 1996. He served on the Southwest Regional Emergency Response Team for 9 years and is one of the Department's Public Information Officers. He has served as the Supervisor of the Detective Division, K-9 Unit, SCUBA Team, and Accident Investigation Team. Captain Marron is a 2016 recipient of the United States Attorney's Award, holds a B.A. in Criminal Justice from Sacred Heart University, and is a 2021 graduate of the Police Executive Research Forum Senior Management Institute for Policing.

MENTAL HEALTH

QUESTION, PERSUADE, REFER (QPR) SUICIDE GATEKEEPER TRAINING

The QPR mission is to reduce suicidal behaviors and save lives by providing innovative, practical, and proven suicide prevention training. Those trained in QPR learn how to recognize the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to question, persuade, and refer someone to help. On Tuesday, November 29th, at 7:30 PM, The HUB will be offering a free virtual QPR training to Darien residents. To register, please email aramsteck@darienct.gov. Registration will be capped at 30 individuals.

HELPFUL TIPS TO BEAT THE HOLIDAY BLUES AND STRESS

- Keep a regular routine as much as possible.
- Exercise daily – even if it's for 15 minutes and try to keep a to schedule.
- Getting enough sleep should also be a priority – strive for 7 hours per night.
- Moderation! It is easy to overindulge in food and/or alcohol during the holidays. While it may temporarily “ease the pain,” it can actually affect your mood and increase depressive symptoms.
- Stay connected with family and friends who value you – even if it is just a quick phone call or text. Feeling supported and cared for is priceless!
- SAY NO. Don't overschedule yourself and add more stress to a hectic time of year. It is ok to say NO.
- Self-Care is critical. Prioritize making time for yourself and doing something that makes you feel good - perhaps an exercise class you enjoy, a long walk, reading, pampering yourself, spending time with friends, or relaxing with simple deep breathing exercises or meditation.
- Volunteer, particularly if you are not able to be with family or friends. Volunteering to help others will certainly make you feel good and get you around other people.

If you are struggling, don't be afraid to ask for professional help. The Town of Darien has a list of [Mental Health Resources](#) on the Town website or individuals may reach out to the Human Services Department for further assistance at 203-656-7328.

HUMAN SERVICES

MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT

Medicare Open Enrollment runs between October 15th and December 7th. During this period, eligible participants can evaluate current plans, review other plan options for cost savings, and make changes. Darien residents should make appointments with Ali Ramsteck, Human Services Director, or Cynthia Hall, Assistant Director, to discuss their enrollment. They can both be reached by phone, 203-656-7328, or by email, at aramsteck@darienct.gov or chall@darienct.gov. If you are new to Choices Counseling, you may make an appointment with Oliver Smith, an experienced Medicare Choices Counselor from the Southwestern CT Area Agency on Aging, who will provide weekly office hours at the Mather Center. To schedule an appointment please call 203-656-7490.

HOLIDAY GIFT-GIVING PROGRAMS

Adopt a Family: Celebrate the holidays by bringing joy to a struggling family. Adopt a family on your own or with friends, book clubs, or church groups. Families range in size from 2-6 people. We are asking for donations of gift cards (family-specific guidance will be provided by Human Services.) Drop off the gift cards to Darien Human Services and we will get them to the "adopted" family.

Adopt a Senior: Help a senior rediscover the true meaning of the holidays. The Human Services staff will choose a Darien senior who could use a little extra cheer this holiday season. We are asking for donations of gift cards (you will receive gift ideas to make things easier and more personal). Drop off the gift cards to Darien Human Services and we will deliver them to your "adopted" senior just in time for the holidays!

Please contact the Human Services Department at 203-656-7328 to participate, or with any questions. Thank you for helping to make a neighbor's holiday a little brighter!

GIFT CARD DONATIONS FOR GROCERIES

Darien Human Services welcomes donations of gift cards to local grocery stores (*Stop & Shop, Palmers, Shop Rite, Trader Joe's*) and distributes them to Darien families and seniors in need. With food prices increasing, it is getting more difficult to put food on the table for some of our neighbors. Residents are asked to drop off the gift cards at Town Hall or mail them to Darien Human Services 2 Renshaw Rd. Town Hall hours are Monday through Thursday 8:00 AM – 5:15 PM. Please contact the Human Services Department at 203-656-7328 with any questions.

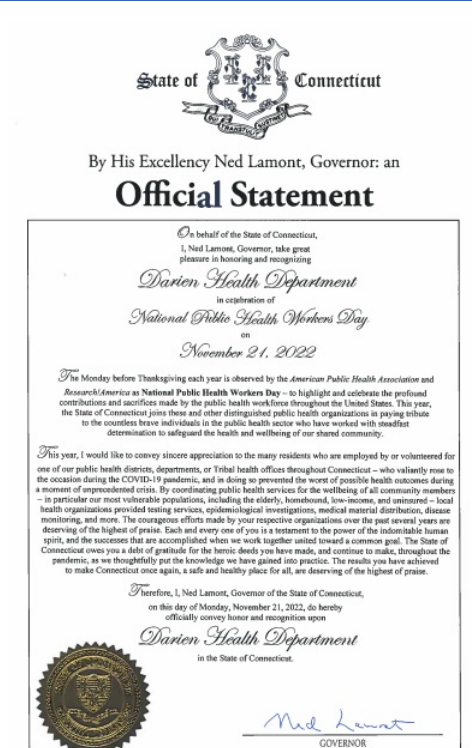
EMPLOYEE HIGHLIGHT

GEOFF GILBERT: CUSTODIAN II, in his own words...

I was a professional touring actor for about 10 years when I moved into an apartment complex in Norwalk. My next-door neighbor was Steve Toscano, who is now the senior man in the Sewer Department. Of course, back then he was a more junior member in the sewer division. I had just finished a year-long tour with the National Shakespeare Company playing the title role in "Hamlet" and Malvolio in "12th night". My unemployment was running out, and I was looking for a part-time job. Steve kindly informed me that there were some openings in the Parks and Recreation division in the Town of Darien and he suggested I apply in person. That, in a nutshell, is how it all started. Funny enough that apartment complex wound up housing a lot of Darien employees through the years, including Darren Oustafine, Kate Buch, and some other employees who have moved on from the town. I've been with the town for 25 years and I must say the best thing about my job is the people that I work with. I think this town is very fortunate to have so

many kind-hearted, warm, interesting, and hard-working people serving the needs of the community. From all of the many departments in Town Hall to the police and fire departments, I sincerely feel more like part of a family than just an employee of the town. I think that is why so many employees stay with the Town for all of their working lives. It is a rare gem of a place.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT



On November 21st, the Darien Health Department received an official proclamation from Governor Ned Lamont to recognize all the work local health workers have accomplished during the pandemic. The proclamation included a note of thanks from the Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Commissioner Juthani, MD:

"This is an opportunity when public health organizations take the time to say "thank you" to our public health workforce who work tirelessly every day to protect us from disease, injury and other health threats.

All of you keep our drinking water clean, our communities healthy, and our children safe. The sheer number of challenges confronting our state reinforce the value of what you bring to our public health workforce.

Your dedication cannot be overstated. Each of you plays an essential role in ensuring the health and wellness needs of the residents of Connecticut. Our

nation's ability to live healthier, longer, and more productive lives rests on your dedication and your commitment to carry out numerous public health initiatives.

So on behalf of Governor Ned Lamont and the entire Administration, (November 21st) Happy Public Health Thank You Day—your commitment to watching over the health of our communities is much appreciated."

Sign up here to receive the
newsletter



Town of Darien | 2 Renshaw Road, Darien, CT 06820

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