At Home in Greenwich - A 10 Year Retrospective

Written by Nike Whittemore

Margaret Mead’s quote, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it’s the only thing that ever has,” is an appropriate description of the founding of At Home in Greenwich. It all started back in the autumn of 2005 when long-time Greenwich resident, Marylin Chou, underwent surgery that rendered her homebound for several weeks. During her recovery, Marylin became completely dependent on her friends to care for her and to drive her to doctor appointments. This experience gave Marylin a new understanding and compassion for those in similar situations, especially for those who didn’t have the local network of support that she did. A few months after Marylin’s recovery, she came across an article in the New York Times (February 2006) about how Beacon Hill in Boston had recently started a “Village” to help elders stay in their homes (a concept called “aging in place”), and that the organization had compiled a manual to help other communities develop similar programs. “I just knew I wanted to bring that model to Greenwich!” Marylin recalls with enthusiasm.

Soon after, Marylin and a few of her interested friends from Greenwich traveled to Boston to meet with Beacon Hill Village’s founder and president, Susan McWhinney Morse, to learn more about the concept. When they returned to Greenwich, they buzzed with excitement and immediately got to work. Greenwich Library agreed to purchase the Beacon Hill Village Manual and community leaders reassured them that such an organization would be beneficial for the senior population in town. Sam Deibler, currently a Vice President with At Home, remembers when Marylin called him while he was serving as the Director of the Greenwich Commission on Aging in 2006. “Marylin wanted to talk about the recent New York Times article about Beacon Hill and her desire to create something comparable in Greenwich,” he recalls. “My initial thought was that it wouldn’t be easy or possible to bring that concept to our town due to its diversity, geographic distances and income disparities. But, as I listened to Marylin’s commitment, drive and enthusiasm, I changed my mind.

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mind and told her it was a highly worthwhile undertaking. I genuinely sensed that if anyone could do it, she and her group of dedicated friends could!”

Encouraged by the positive feedback from community leaders, an At Home Advisory Council was formed in 2007. “Bob Arnold, President of Family Centers, was a member of that Advisory Council and was very sympathetic to our mission,” states Marylin. “He gave us free office space at Family Centers’ Bridge Street location, as well as a telephone, a computer and the extension of Family Centers’ 501(c)(3) non-profit status so we could receive tax-deductible donations.”

With a growing sense of support, Marylin’s group next approached Betty Hauptman, a successful fundraiser, who agreed to help them. Betty voluntarily and single-handedly raised their seed money that year which accelerated At Home’s momentum. Soon after, the organization became incorporated, obtained its own 501(c)(3) status, named its first Board of Directors (with Marylin as President), moved its office to the campus of the Second Congregational Church, and hired an Executive Director, Lise Jameson, LCSW.

“We decided to hire Lise for the Executive Director position since she had been working as a social worker at Family Centers and had excitedly joined us as a volunteer right from the beginning,” explains Marylin. A month after Lise was hired, At Home officially launched in February 2008. The launching included 50 founding members, but services had yet to be offered since according to the “Village” model, they were to be created with respect to the unique interests and needs of the members. “Under Marylin’s direction, the social events came together quickly and beautifully, including concerts, tours of gardens and neighborhoods, and reading plays and poetry,” recalls Lise, underscoring the importance of the social aspect of At Home. “Friends move away and it’s harder to meet people to do things with as one ages in place,” she adds. In addition, At Home soon began offering interest groups that were organized and lead by the members themselves, including book clubs, museum outings, cooking classes, current events, nature walks, movies, and dining.

“The practical aspect of helping people stay independent and in their homes was up to me as a clinician,” acknowledges Lise. As a result, Lise started providing home safety checks to assess fall risks and compiled a list of personally vetted home service providers for members, such as plumbers, electricians, handymen, and painters. “This is a coveted, ever-evolving list of about 110 licensed and insured vendors that I, and members who’ve used them, highly recommend,” boasts Lise. “I tell members not to use the yellow pages for safety’s sake, but to call the office and we’ll connect them with what they need.”

Other practical aspects of At Home that Lise developed were a vetting process for local home health agencies and coordinating transportation services for members. “We knew that driving could become an issue as people aged in their homes, but we didn’t want to become a taxi service,” explains Lise. “So we got a team of folks together (mostly At Home members) who volunteer to drive other members to doctor appointments when needed.” This service has set At Home apart from other transportation services in town since it offers “door to door” service and not just “curb to

If you find a loved one on the floor unhurt, you may call the dispatch # for the police department and request an “officer pick up assistance” and 2 officers will arrive at your door to help pick the person up and place in a chair or bed: (203) 622-8003. If there is a question of injury, please call 911.
A Special Thanks to Our Many Volunteers

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Mark Zimmerman

The At Home in Greenwich Vision

A community of seniors who feel safe and comfortable in their homes, enjoy the many benefits of lasting friendships and engaging social activities, and have a reliable place to turn when they need help or have questions.
THANKS TO THE SUPPORT OF OUR


A special thanks to our Legacy Circle Donors

Doris Ohlsen Carla Wallach Sarah Whittemore Jack Russell Smith

When you support At Home in Greenwich with a legacy gift made through your will, you enable future generations to enjoy the peace of mind and sense of community from At Home in Greenwich…


2017 in review!

240 home visits

100+ phone consultations
DONORS OVER THE LAST 10 YEARS!


430 referrals to screened providers

220 rides given by volunteers

230 social and educational events

190+ members and growing!
Please Join Us

Pop the Cork!

At Home’s 10-Year Anniversary

At Home in Greenwich will hold its annual fundraiser on Friday evening, September 14th. A landmark year for the organization, At Home is celebrating its 10th anniversary. Festivities for this milestone will unfold in style at the Delamar in Greenwich. This new venue is a fitting entrance for At Home’s new decade, providing a premier waterfront location where guests will mix and mingle harbor side. Great music provided by DJ Runna. Planned once again, by Chairmen Diane Jennings, Helen Maher, and Suzy Kjorlien, this event will truly be a ‘Celebration’ for all to enjoy!

BUY TICKETS AT WWW.ATHOMEINGREENWICH.ORG

The At Home In Greenwich Board & Advisory Council

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**At Home In Greenwich Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2017**

**OPERATING EXPENSES**
**TOTAL: $202,676**

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<th>Category</th>
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**TOTAL REVENUE & SUPPORT: $255,097**

<table>
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**Letter From President Continued:**

Continued from front cover

member Advisory Council. We have a dedicated staff led by an amazing Executive Director who is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and continues to be surrounded by teams of dedicated volunteers. We are looking forward to continuing to grow our membership, travel to exciting places, eat, share and cook amazing food, visit landmarks and museums, celebrate milestones, debate current events, learn a new skill, read great poetry and books together and simply enjoy each others company and support.

As we look to the future, we want to offer the most sincere thank you to those that have supported us over the past decade. It is my true honor to write this note of thanks to our founding members who created At Home in Greenwich and those that believed in us enough to help in that first year, including our Executive Director. Thank you to those that took the leap 10 years ago to join an organization that wasn’t sure yet what it was going to become, to our more than 750 donors and 120 volunteers over the years. And thank you to our current members for seeing the value that At Home can offer. It’s so great to see all of the friendships that have developed over the years. Without all of you, this organization wouldn’t exist as it is today, creating a social network of people who have fun together and are there when you need them, providing indispensable support to each other. Cheers to another successful 10 years and beyond!

- Michelle Beltrano ESQ., President

**AT HOME IN GREENWICH** is a vital non-profit organization that was formed to HELP SENIORS in our community STAY IN THEIR HOMES safely and optimize their quality of life. It is managed by a dedicated staff, powered by donors and volunteers and is often described as a “safety net”.

Our donors continued...


Our apologies for any missed names.
The At Home In Greenwich Mission
To enable Greenwich seniors to confidently age in place by providing stimulating social and educational programs and assistance with matters of health and safety.

To learn more about At Home in Greenwich
Email: director@athomeingreenwich.org
Call: (203) 422-2342

Or Complete and Mail to:
At Home in Greenwich, 139 East Putnam Avenue, Greenwich, CT 06830
Name
________________________________________________________
Address
________________________________________________________
City __________ St ________ Zip _________________________________
Phone
________________________________________________________
Email
________________________________________________________

Please send information about making a contribution to At Home in Greenwich

Join Today!
At Home in Greenwich is a welcoming, supportive community. Newcomers are never strangers for long, and the social network created here gives members the confidence to enjoy life at home.

Membership cost:
• $500 for individuals
• $650 per household

Financial aid available to those who qualify

What’s included:
• Monthly calendar of social and cultural activities
• Free home safety assessment
• Bad weather phone check-in
• Meaningful volunteer opportunities
• List of 100+ vetted service vendors
• As-needed confidential consultations with a licensed social worker

To join or learn more:
• Call (203) 422-2342
• Email director@athomeingreenwich.org
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