



THE DEPOT

**Darien's Youth Center
25 Heights Road, Darien CT 06820**

**Trina Clemans
Executive Development Director
tclemans@dariendepot.com
dariendepot.com**

The Depot's mission is to build resilient youth and an engaged community.

The Depot is a collaborative youth center where community needs are addressed with staff supported guidance, programming by youth, and parenting education. An alcohol and drug-free zone monitored by caring, vetted adults, The Depot provides a safe space for youth to develop leadership, planning, and decision-making skills, interact with people of different backgrounds, access adult role models and serve as community assets.

The Depot Programs

The Depot welcomes all Darien-resident middle and high school youth from MMS, DHS, private schools and home schooled to create new programs, join programs and activities, and access resources. Parent programs reflect undercurrents of strong public feelings and opinions that are detectable though not always openly discussed. The Depot starts conversations providing the scaffolding and education needed for parents to formulate an informed decision based on personal and family values. As a safe place, The Depot promotes mutual respect, patience and integrity as we learn together.

A summary of 2015-2016 programs and community partners follows on pages 2-10 of this document.



2015-2016 YOUTH PROGRAMMING

These Depot hosted and sponsored activities are created and managed by Darien youth. The students are charged with planning, marketing and fundraising to support programs and events, as well as recruiting volunteers and working with mentors, local business owners and town officials. Activities take place an average two-four times per month, however, students involved with the coordination of these programs dedicate many additional hours to their planning and execution.

YOUTH PROGRAM SERIES	Purpose:	Accomplishment:
Sunday with Seniors	Promote and encourage intergenerational empathy, conversations and learning.	Intergenerational friendships between senior citizens and Darien youth deepening empathy, conversations and learning from others in a different phase of life.
Helping Hand (http://patch.com/connecticut/darien/thanks-giving-back-your-kids-0)	Helping Hand's goal is to raise awareness and collect supplies for the Darien Human Services Closet, which are in turn donated to Darien residents in need, especially at the holidays.	Donations of gifts-in-kind to Darien Human Services and greater awareness of challenges faces citizens of Darien.
Mother / Daughter Nights	Educate and facilitate often difficult conversations about women's health between mothers and daughters in the 7 th and 8 th grades	Discuss and learn about women's health issues from experts at the Sexual Assault and Crisis Education Center in an open and judgment-free setting.
Girls Night Out (http://www.darientimes.com/47499/state-budget-cuts-hit-home-at-the-depot/)	To provide a safe, healthy environment where high school girls can learn about, discuss, and support each other while discussing sensitive, relevant topics. The Depot hosts women from FIRP, the Families in Recovery Program at every other meeting.	Interaction with women from the Families in Recovery Program (FIRP), who have had very different life experience than most youth in Darien. FIRP is a residential program that helps pregnant or parenting single mothers with treatment and keeps them actively engaged in the lives of their children.
Avenue of Dreams (http://www.darientimes.com/59929/prom-donations-cafap/)	Promotion and sourcing gifts-in-kind for dress collection	Donations of gifts-in-kind to Connecticut Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents (CAFAP)
Student League of Darien (SLOD)	Integration of the Darien High School male community	Opportunity for younger males to learn from and become friends with older male students at the high school



2015-2016 YOUTH PROGRAMMING

These Depot hosted and sponsored activities are created and managed by Darien youth. The students are charged with planning, marketing and fundraising to support programs and events, as well as recruiting volunteers and working with mentors, local business owners and town officials. Activities take place an average two-four times per month, however, students involved with the coordination of these programs dedicate many additional hours to their planning and execution.

YOUTH EVENTS	Purpose:	Accomplishment:
<p>Youth at The Depot organize events to promote Depot programs, thank community partners, and introduce a wider cross section of the community to the Depot’s mission all the while building event planning and hosting skills, practicing public speaking and promotional skills as well as serving as role models. An average of 15 events take place each month September – June.</p>		
Celebrity Chef Nights (http://darien.dailyvoice.com/neighbors/darien-depot-hosts-celebrity-chef-series/441861/)	Introduce Darien youth to the many local restaurants and give exposure to local chefs who support the Depot through gifts-in-kind	Celebrity Chef Nights serve as a “thank you” and support for area restaurateurs.
DHS Theater 308 Reception (http://theatre308.org)	Host post production celebration for Darien High School students involved in the theater program	Youth support peers with recognition as well as experience the work required to independently fund, host and promote a free community event.
Depot tours for Darien middle school parents	Promote the mission and program of The Depot to the parents of the next generation of Darien’s youth	Youth practice planning, hosting, public speaking and promotional skills.
4 th and 5 th Grade Parties	The two events’ primary purpose is to familiarize rising middle school students and their parents with the staff, programs, activities, and resources available to them at The Depot once enrolled in a middle school program.	Depot Youth staff the event and practice planning, hosting, public speaking and promotional skills and serve as role models to elementary age children of Darien.
6 th Grade Ice Cream Social	Encourage 6 th grade students to visit The Depot and familiarize them with the staff, programs and resources housed at the Depot.	Depot Youth staff the event and practice planning, hosting, public speaking and promotional skills and serve as role models to middle school students.



2015-2016 YOUTH PROGRAMMING

These Depot hosted and sponsored activities are created and managed by Darien youth. The students are charged with planning, marketing and fundraising to support programs and events, as well as recruiting volunteers and working with mentors, local business owners and town officials. Activities take place an average two-four times per month, however, students involved with the coordination of these programs dedicate many additional hours to their planning and execution.

YOUTH FUNDRAISERS

Purpose:

Accomplishment:

Youth at The Depot organize fundraisers to support specific causes as well as their program series and events at The Depot. Fundraisers include car washes, Drop the Mic, 3x3 basketball tournaments and:

Band Night
<http://patch.com/connecticut/darien/depot-band-night-contributions-0>

Raise money for programs of special interest to The Depot youth community.

Financial donation to Darien's 7th Annual Feed My Starving Children Mobile Pack Event (September 2015)

Depot Diner
<http://patch.com/connecticut/darien/depot-diner-sponsored-stop-n-shop-0>

Raise money for youth programming at The Depot.

Support youth programming at the Depot and generate funds to donate to causes important to the youth of Darien.

Holiday Wrap-Up
<http://darien.dailyvoice.com/news/darien-teens-wrap-up-christmas-with-fundraiser-at-the-depot/612515/>

YOUTH VOLUNTEERISM

Youth at The Depot organize themselves and volunteer in the wider Darien community. Youth assist the Kiwanas Club, Darien Youth Commission, Darien Public Schools, Darien Sidewalk Sales, the Memorial Day Parade, the Tilly Pond Regatta to name a few.

YOUTH SOCIALIZING

As a youth center, The Depot is open for drop-in Tuesday through Thursday 5-8pm and Friday and Saturday nights from 7-11pm, On weekdays this year, the hours from 3-5pm are reserved for administrative work. However, as the Program Director is already working on-site, youths are welcome to gather socially and to complete school and homework assignments. Youth focused groups, such as sports teams and clubs, are welcome to use the space to meet after school.



2015-2016 PARENT PROGRAMMING IN SUPPORT OF YOUTH

Depot hosted and sponsored programs that reflect undercurrents of strong public feelings and opinions that are detectable though not always openly discussed. Open to all members of the community and their guests. This list is a sampling of The Depot parent programming over the course of this academic year.

PARENT PROGRAM SERIES	Purpose:	Accomplishment:
Straight Talk: Heroin Epidemic Part I (September 2015) Part II (November 2015) (http://www.darientimes.com/55942/depot-darien-police-offer-the-straight-talk-on-towns-heroin-use/)	Frank discussion about current issues facing our small town with qualified experts and plenty of time for Q&A	Discussion and actionable insights for parents. The two weeks after the second Depot heroin epidemic panel, the Darien Police prescription drug drop box collected 10 followed by 45 pounds of pills versus an average of 4 pounds per week. Prescription painkiller abuse is a gateway to heroin addiction.
Straight Talk: Enforcing Age-Appropriate Boundaries for Children	Discussion on establishing healthy controls over kids by setting and enforcing age appropriate boundaries and rules, and providing lessons in character development.	Discussion and actionable insights for parents of middle school youth.
Straight Talk: Drugs Help or Hindrance? (Upcoming March 2016)	Presentation of the different types of drugs being used today - learn to identify drugs even when cleverly packaged and disguised. Four young adults will talk about their path to addiction and recovery and take your questions.	Anticipate discussion and actionable insights for parents of middle and high school youth.
Coffee & Conversation Parent Information Series	Informal conversations about raising healthy, happy teens. Q&A with local experts. Events are sponsored by The Depot, Silver Hill Hospital and Communities 4 Action (formerly LFCRAC).	Discussion and actionable insights for parents.
Learning Series: Essential Study Skills for Middle School Students (http://www.darientimes.com/60480/depot-study/)	Learning how to support strategic study skills and live long learning,	Discussion and actionable insights for parents of middle school youth.



2015-2016 PARENT PROGRAMMING IN SUPPORT OF YOUTH

Depot hosted and sponsored programs that reflect undercurrents of strong public feelings and opinions that are detectable though not always openly discussed. Open to all members of the community and their guests. This list is a sampling of The Depot parent programming over the course of this academic year.

PARENT PROGRAM SERIES	Purpose:	Accomplishment:
Learning Series: Navigating the world of college test preparation	Free opportunity for freshmen, sophomores, and juniors as well as their parents to learn differences between the "new" PSAT, the "old" and "new" SATs, and the ACT - and how to prepare for these tests.	Discussion and actionable insights for parents of high school youth.

2015-2016 YOUTH LOCAL COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

Depot hosted and sponsored programs in partnership with local organizations.

COMMUNITY PROGRAM SERIES	Purpose:	Community Accomplishment:
Cop Shop Community Partner: Darien Police Department	Opportunity for Darien youth to ask their local police force about any issues, concern or interests in a confidential setting.	Provides an opportunity for high school students to interact with and learn and from the DPD in a friendly, interactive environment.
CSI Darien (http://www.darientimes.com/14025/csi-darien/) Community Partner: Darien Police Department	CSI gives middle school youth a better understanding of Darien Police Officers' duties, responsibilities and training requirements.	Provides an opportunity for middle school students to interact with and learn and from the DPD in a friendly, interactive environment.
Cops and Kids Adventures (http://www.darientimes.com/48936/cops-kids-conclude-this-years-adventures/) Community Partner: Darien Police Department	A cooperative team consisting of The Depot, Darien Police Officers and middle school youth who collectively enjoy free adventure outings and community outreach programs during the course of the school year.	Provides an opportunity for middle school students to interact with and learn and from the DPD in an individualized, friendly, interactive environment.



2015-2016 YOUTH LOCAL COMMUNITY PROGRAMMING

Depot hosted and sponsored programs in partnership with local organizations.

COMMUNITY PROGRAM SERIES	Purpose:	Community Accomplishment:
Funbusters (http://www.darien-ymca.org/funbusters/) Community Partner: Darien YMCA	Promotes independence and life skills learning for adults with special challenges. The focus is on learning important life skills to support an active and independent lifestyle. Each week Funbuster participants socialize, do crafts and recreational activities with youth at The Depot.	Depot youth host, socialize, and form friendships with special needs adults who have had a very different life experience despite living in the same town.
COMMUNITY EVENT	Purpose:	Accomplishment:
Alumni Town Wide Party (November 2015)	Celebrated 25 years of serving Darien's youth, welcomed back alumni to reconnect with The Depot mission and programming.	Promote and celebrate Darien youth, alumni of the Depot and committed community partnerships.

2015 – 2016 YOUTH NATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Depot hosted and sponsored programs that are part of a national organization.

NATIONAL PROGRAM	Purpose:	Accomplishment:
SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) (http://patch.com/connecticut/darien/darien-sadd-chapter-seeks-raise-awareness-destructive-behavior-0) 	SADD's mission is "to provide students with the best prevention tools possible to deal with the issues of underage drinking, other drug use, impaired driving and other destructive decisions."	Team building, increased confidence, reduced peer pressure and propensity for risky behavior.



FORMAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

The Depot's relationships with the following organizations are long-standing, mutually beneficial and strongly contribute to the work and resources made available to youth and the community at large.

Formal working relationships:	Purpose:	Effect on youth of Darien:
Darien Police Department	Support <u>community policing</u> – click on link for U.S. Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing Services office definition	<p>Informative, positive and engaging opportunities to interact with the Darien Police Department.</p> <p>In practice, community policing involves forming partnerships with community organizations, prioritizing transparency, actively pursuing feedback and establishing programs that allow police to engage with residents outside of the law enforcement arena.</p> <p>“Law enforcement is finding that in addition to bringing police closer to the people, community policing offers a myriad of other benefits. Making effective use of the talents and resources available within communities will help extend severely strained police resources. As police interaction with the community becomes more positive, productive partnerships will be formed, leading to greater satisfaction with police services and increased job satisfaction among officers.”ⁱ</p>
Darien YMCA	Promote diversity, peer support, inclusion and positive social interactions between the special needs community and youth of Darien	<p>Promotes acceptance, empathy and gratitude for Darien citizens different than themselves</p> <p>In general, three groups of youth most benefit from being a friend to a person with special needs.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Students naturally interested in forming friendships with all kinds of people who tend to be socially talented and get great pleasure from the helping role. 2) Students who, because of particular needs of their own, need a boost to their self esteem gleaned from helping and being made more aware of all the abilities they do have. 3) Students in need of empathy training learned through the patience and caring modeled by peers and staff. Additional supports help these students become more successful.ⁱⁱ



FORMAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

The Depot’s relationships with the following organizations are long-standing, mutually beneficial and strongly contribute to the work and resources made available to youth and the community at large.

Formal working relationships:	Purpose:	Effect on youth of Darien:
Silver Hill Hospital	Provide access to expert knowledge on trending topics in mental health and substance abuse specific to the Town of Darien	<p>Access to trusted experts with a wealth of first hand experience and knowledge presented in a non-threatening environment.</p> <p>Silver Hill is a nationally recognized, non-profit specialty hospital for mental health and substance abuse needs for adolescents (ages 13-17) and adults (ages 18+). Doctors, nurse practitioners and therapists regularly make scheduled visits to The Depot program series and events to answer questions and explain mental health and substance abuse issues facing Darien youth and the community. Experts usually sit in circle groups and discuss, rather than “present” – the youth are more comfortable. Discussions embrace topics that affect a range of ages and both males and females.</p>

INFORMAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Continually evolving informal working relationships based on youth needs and undercurrents of strong public feelings and opinions that are detectable though not always openly discussed, The Depot’s relationship with these organizations strongly contributes to activities and resources. This is not an exhaustive list but features our most active relationships.

Informal working relationship:	Purpose of relationship:	Effect on youth of Darien:
Communities 4Action	Serve as an exceptional resource with access to trending pertinent information, recommended programming and exceptional speakers on topics in mental health and substance abuse.	<p>Enhanced programming</p> <p>Partners with The Depot on student programs and provides speakers for fall training for Stamford, Greenwich, New Canaan SADD & YAT. Provides informational content and speakers for community and parent presentations.</p>



INFORMAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Continually evolving informal working relationships based on youth needs and undercurrents of strong public feelings and opinions that are detectable though not always openly discussed, The Depot's relationship with these organizations strongly contributes to activities and resources. This is not an exhaustive list but features our most active relationships.

Informal working relationship:	Purpose of relationship:	Effect on youth of Darien:
Darien Human Services	Provide supplies for the Darien Human Services Household Goods Closet and for the annual Toy Drive.	<p>Enhanced empathy and awareness of the human condition in the Town of Darien</p> <p>Human Resources helps ONLY Darien residents. The Household Goods Closet is an effort to help clients with modest incomes, spend more of their funds on food and less on expensive household goods. In receiving the list of Darien resident needs - both supplies and individuals in need of holiday gifts - youth are made aware of economic and personal struggles of Darien's residents; families and children, singles and the elderly.</p>
Darien Public Schools	Mutually beneficial partnership leveraged to place volunteers and cross-promote programming	<p>Promotes volunteerism and community support</p> <p>The Depot youth volunteer to help at events in all Darien Public Schools including but not limited to the Tokeneke Pancake Breakfast, Tokeneke Pumpkin Carnival, Royle Round-up and often donate "A Depot Birthday Party" to silent auction committees as well as make presentations at MMS and DHS on trending youth topics.</p>
Darien Youth Commission	Mutually beneficial partnership leveraged to place volunteers and cross-promote programming	<p>Promotes volunteerism and community support</p> <p>The Depot youth volunteer to staff Youth Commission functions including but not limited to the Tilly Pond Model Boat Regatta, Community Arts Festival, Holiday Community Movie, and TOPS. The Youth Commission contributes arts and crafts supplies to The Depot each summer. The Youth Commission's Summer Activity Program is run out of The Depot (for kids going into 7th, 8th 9th grades).</p>

ⁱ <https://www.binghamton.edu/police/community-policing.html>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.tolerance.org/supplement/friends-enhancing-inclusion>