

The Darien Community Association

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### **Darien Foundation Grant Provides Continued Support to the DCA Bird Sanctuary**

The Darien Foundation has awarded more than \$18,000 to the Darien Community Association (DCA), to fund improvements in the four-acre bird sanctuary located on their Middlesex Road property. These include a pondless waterfall for the birds and butterflies, as well as additional trees, benches and equipment.

This second round of grant funding will improve the sanctuary's ability to attract birds via the availability of cascading water (now installed), and the new trees will provide additional cover and food. These new features will also enhance the visitor experience, as the sanctuary is open daily to the public to enjoy from sunrise to sundown.

After extensive planning, consultation with experts and with funding from the DCA board of directors, DCA volunteers launched work on the bird sanctuary in 2011: clearing invasive plants, establishing walking trails, and planting native bushes attractive to bees and butterflies. The goal was to build a successful, authentic bird sanctuary and native plant garden, with shelter, food, water and nesting sites for birds - so that the DCA could play a part in helping to restore native plant and declining bird populations, while also providing the community a beautiful open space as well as an opportunity for wildlife and conservation education.

"The Darien Foundation provided significant funding to the DCA in 2013 for deer fencing, since protecting native plantings was essential for the success of the sanctuary," said Darien Foundation Executive Director Sarah Woodberry. "It has become a beautiful town asset and great example of what a nonprofit organization and its dedicated volunteers can contribute to the community. We are thrilled to continue our support."

The DCA Bird Sanctuary is child-friendly (totally fenced-in) and features well-laid winding trails and numerous educational features and activities for children, including a stump walk and rock spiral. The DCA has hosted over 200 school-aged children on sanctuary tours, in addition to numerous adult groups. "The sanctuary is a retreat and learning space for the community - free to enter and enjoy for all, what a gift," concludes Mallory Arents, Associate Director of Programs and Services at the Darien Library.

Chris Filmer, DCA board member and one of the architects of the sanctuary, comments "The support of the Darien Foundation has been critical to our success. We look forward to continuing our partnership and making the bird sanctuary even better."

The Darien Foundation provides grants for technology and capital initiatives which benefit and create opportunity for Darien's youth, support our town's safety and security services, and enhance the overall quality of life in Darien through collaboration with community organizations. The DCA is only one of many local groups who have benefitted from their generous funding. Since its founding in 1998, the Foundation has awarded more than \$4.2 million in grants to the Darien Public Schools, town emergency services, and local organizations.

More information on the Darien Foundation and the DCA Bird Sanctuary may be found at [darienfoundation.org](http://darienfoundation.org) and [dariendca.org](http://dariendca.org).