

Wilton will miss former Selectman Ken Dartley

By [Jeannette Ross](#) on August 18, 2016 in [Lead News](#), [People](#) · [0 Comments](#)



Stay at Home in Wilton board member Dave Schmitt, left, enjoys a laugh with Ken Dartley, center, one of the organization's founding members, and volunteer Dick Louis. The three enjoyed Stay at Home's Annual Summer BBQ at Merwin Meadows last July.

Members of the Wilton community were informed longtime community

member Ken Dartley died Wednesday, Aug. 17.

"Wilton has lost a good, thoughtful and committed citizen and we have lost a sincere man," Republican Town Committee Chairman Al Alper said in an email.

Dartley was involved in a number of community activities including the formation of Kick for Nick and the founding of Wilton Commons and Stay at Home in Wilton. He also served briefly on the Board of Selectmen from September through December 2015.



Ken Dartley served as a selectman for several months last year.

Following the death of Pfc. Nick Madaras, Dartley joined with the Madaras family and the American Legion to initiate the program that has shipped more than 45,250 of soccer balls to children around the world.

A Wilton High School graduate, Nick joined the marines and was sent to Iraq. While home on leave in July 2006, he collected as many soccer balls as he could and brought them back for the children in the area he was serving. That September he was killed in an IED explosion.

Kick for Nick was first established to send the soccer balls to children in Iraq and Afghanistan, but today the project has grown to worldwide proportions.

Recently he began a Facebook page for Kick for Nick supporters.

Dartley also was a member of a dedicated group of residents and former residents who worked for a decade to bring Wilton Commons to fruition. The odyssey began in 2004 finally culminating in senior citizens moving into the

affordable apartments in 2013. In the recreation/activity room sits a piano, donated by Dartley who was on the Wilton Commons Board of Directors.

“I think we set an example for other towns,” Dartley said just before Wilton Commons opened its doors. “If you want to keep your seniors, build something nice for them.

“I think George and the rest of the group are justifiably proud,” Dartley said of George Ciaccio, president of Wilton Commons Inc., and the rest of the board. “I hope the town likes it. I know the seniors will like it. How could you not?”

Dartley was also at the groundbreaking of Wilton Commons phase two earlier this year. Phase two will accept residents into congregate care next month.



Three of the people responsible for bringing Wilton Commons to fruition visit the building just after it received its certificate of occupancy last week. From left are Ed Hyde, attorney; Ken Dartley, board member; and George Ciaccio, president of Wilton Commons Inc. Dartley was immensely proud of the project's success.—Jeannette Ross photo

If someone were looking for Dartley around town, they needed to go no further than a social event sponsored by Stay at Home in Wilton, another project Dartley played a major role in. Whether it was a Christmas party, barbecue or anniversary party, Dartley was among the participants

celebrating the organization founded to help senior citizens remain in their Wilton homes. He would also, undoubtedly, be showing off photos of his three grandchildren.

Following the death of his wife, Chris, in 2013, Dartley wanted to make a lasting gift in her memory. Teaching and needlework were her passions, so he established the Christine Dartley Memorial Fund. The fund has sponsored a series of programs, Teaching a New Generation How to Stitch, offered at the Wilton Historical Society.

The committee that established the Veterans Memorial Green counted Dartley among its members and he was a former member of the Republican Town Committee.

“Ken was deeply involved in many activities to help others, without expecting personal benefit,” his friend Alex Ruskewich wrote in a [letter to the editor](#).

“It is only in the last three years that he started doing something for himself, spending more time with his grandchildren, which he loved immensely,” Ruskewich wrote. “As a friend I will miss Ken, and believe the town of Wilton, which he loved, will miss him as much.”

The Bulletin has received no information yet regarding services