

## **Sanctuary at Bellbrook**

### **Best Associate Story**

**Charlotte Johnson, Dining Service Aide, Master Gardner**



**During Charlottes five year tenure as a Dining Services Aide, Sanctuary at Bellbrook has had the awesome privilege of benefiting from a truly engaged partner in providing health and wellness to the Elder care partners of Bellbrook.**

Charlotte began working at Bellbrook in 2010. Charlotte has always had a great love for gardening, and was a great supporter of the community's approach to providing healthy, delicious food to the residents we serve.

Charlotte became a master gardener in effort to gain more knowledge to support the vegetable and herb gardens she tends to with the Elder care partners at the community. With Bellbrook's initiative to grow our own herbs and help the Elders tend their own gardens, we knew the right person to help us with this job.

Initially, Bellbrook only had one raised garden bed. For what Charlotte had in mind, that was simply not going to be enough... Working in conjunction with an Eagle Scout, Charlotte oversaw the location and building of five additional 5 raised herb and vegetable gardens on the grounds. From there she worked to get the herbs and vegetables planted and oversaw their growth and care.

The gardens in all included the following:

- Cilantro
- Dill
- Fennel
- Lavender
- 6 Cultivars of Basil
- Lemon Verbena
- Rosemary
- Oregano
- Marjoram
- Lemon Thyme
- Garden Thyme
- Pineapple Sage
- Garden Sage
- Variegated Sage
- Curly Parsley
- French Tarragon
- Savory
- Italian Parsley
- Spearmint
- Chocolate Mint
- Nasturtium
- Viola
- Dianthus

- Stevia
- Lemon Grass
- Cherry Tomatoes
- Slicing Tomatoes
- Chives
- Purslane
- Mini Eggplant
- Hot Peppers



*(The above board notes pictures taken of the gardens on campus at Bellbrook )*

Charlotte would harvest the vegetables and extra herbs and provide them to the Elders living in apartments. Charlotte would use fresh herbs grown in the gardens in the 4 hydration stations throughout the community, giving it a special flavor and a wonderful appeal.



Already accomplishing so much and giving so much of her own time to the community and the gardens did not slow Charlotte down. Charlotte created a "Secrets from the Garden" program for the Elders in assisted and independent living highlighting all the wonderful fragrances from herbs and how to use them. What started as a one-time educational program on lavender spread to be a routine monthly program. To date Charlotte has done Secrets from the Garden program on Lavender, Sunflowers, Apples, Pumpkins, and Scents of Christmas. Not only does Charlotte share her knowledge, she provides samples, educational information, handouts, and refreshments using the featured month's theme.



*(Secret of the Garden Presentation on Lavender)*

Charlotte also reaches out to the Elder care partners to find out their favorite part of the garden, what herbs they have enjoyed and is already making plans and changes for next year by asking what they would enjoy to see more of in their gardens.

Charlotte's love for the land expands far beyond just the gardens at Bellbrook. She is a supporter of the environment. Charlotte will frequently collect metals that are going to be thrown out, take them to the metal recycling facility and donate the money to Dining Service Recognition programs to support her fellow staff.

Charlotte love and passion for gardening is something she chose to share, grow and develop with the Elder and employee care partners at Bellbrook. Charlotte has found a way to incorporate what she loves into her daily work, for all of us to benefit.





*(Raised beds Summer 2014)*

