

Sanctuary at Bellbrook, Rochester Hills, MI

Best Associate Story: Long Term Care

Biju Nair joined Sanctuary at Bellbrook almost 5 years ago. He started as a brand new Certified Nursing Assistant. His journey with Bellbrook started on the West Sanctuary. Biju had a quiet presence; he spoke softly and instantly settled in and became a part of the Sanctuary Family. Though quiet and kind, all the Elders in his neighborhood truly enjoy when Biju is here. Like a good friend, he became an important part of each Elders' everyday life.

Through the eyes of one of the Elders

“Good morning,” he said. He said those two words every time he came to help me. Biju always had a smile and a gentle, compassionate voice when he came to my bedside. To help me wake up and get ready for my day, he would wash my face and neck. With his dignified manner, Biju helped me rise from the bed and get ready to take my first walk for the day. His hands were gentle and guided me to the bathroom because he knows my feet are unsteady. He is like my faithful companion on a journey with me; it was like the Lord walking with me. He assisted me into the bathroom in a safe and secure demeanor. However, he gave me the privacy I needed. After completing my morning rituals, he assisted me back to my bed to help me get dressed for breakfast. After helping me dress, he escorted me to *The Hearth Room* to receive nourishment from breakfast. He assured me that he would come back after breakfast to escort me back to my room. “Thank you,” I said to him. “It is my honor to be with you,” Biju said with a gentle smile.

It's not just the Elders that see his true gifts...It's a daily ritual for Biju to be at the side of a Elder comforting them, helping them, or just being their friend....

Through the eyes of the Chaplain...

. . . I heard the telephone ringing in my office. The Concierge was on the other end of the telephone. She told me that there was a request for a pastoral care visit for an Elder in need. I

responded immediately to the request. In the Elder's room, I noticed Bijū assisting her with eating lunch. Gently, he encouraged the woman to drink coffee with her own hands. "It is too heavy to hold," she said. Bijū reassured her that he would assist her if there was a need. He smiled kindly at her. Sitting up in bed, she became tearful. She had difficulty holding her soup spoon. Like the Good Samaritan, Bijū immediately met her needs of eating her food. As a grandson would talk to his grandmother, he said, "It's going to be okay. I want you to enjoy your lunch." She looked up into his eyes, and smiled. She thanked him for his assistance. I observed that her demeanor changed from one of distress to one of peace. After the Elder completed her lunch, I invited her to pray with me to thank God for the meal. During the prayer, Bijū joined us. He took her hand and gently added to the prayer his thankfulness for her presence in his life. "She is a true blessing in my life," he said. The Elder added at the end of the prayer: "Dear Lord. I thank you for Bijū, who is like a grandson to me. He brings me great comfort and joy. I appreciate you sending me this wonderful gift in my life. Continue to bless him this day, and help him to know that I will continue to pray for him as he helps all of us at Bellbrook." We proclaimed a resounding "Amen." . . .

Many of us knew Bijū was a secret gem. In his quest to grow and develop, he was always looking at opportunities to take on more responsibilities... Working with the nursing leadership, he took on all the scheduling responsibilities for the nursing community. I wondered...Bijū seems shy, how will he work with all the CENA's and Nurses to ensure we have the care partners where we need to care for all the Elders?

Through the eyes of the Director of Nursing...

Bijū is a silent peace keeper...Scheduling for a busy skilled community on a good day can be a challenge... Knowing the importance of consistent care giving teams, Bijū holds himself to a higher standard to ensure each associate is given a fair and workable schedule with the same

Elders to promote the necessary continuity of care. He is a warm and welcoming face for all new employee care partners, and works diligently with all to help promote cross training within other departments when employees have an interest. He works to help manage the many employee care partners competing school schedules. He checks in on weekends, holidays and evenings to ensure the new employees are working well with their preceptors and tries to ward off any problems to ensure an even consistency of care for all residents. He is meticulous, organized and thorough. He always has a plan to handle shortfalls, all with minimal to no overtime. He keeps a close eye to make sure employee care partners are not feeling burned out or overwhelmed. He helps me make good decisions about new employees and determining the best neighborhood for them to be a successful teammate. Each and every day I thank God for sending this loving, caring, servant leader to be a part of this team. He is the essence of a transforming, healing presence that means so much to the Elder and employee care partners he serves each day.

When thinking about what Bijou sets out to accomplish, the answer is clear... His goal is to be an example for others to serve in a quiet, respectful, dignified manner that all can relate too. Bijou's peers see him as a mentor and a role model. The Elder see him as a friend, a confidant, and an exceptional care partner. His work has a daily impact on the life of each Elder. They look for him, they share with him, and they even developed their own way of giving back to him by hosting a baby shower for his expecting wife. Bijou gives each of them the ultimate gift of sharing his life with theirs and being humbled to share in their lives.