

Eating healthy begins at home for local seniors in new partnership



By Brock Weir

Chartwell Hollandview has, since its inception, prided itself on helping seniors lead healthy and active lives within its own community, whether it is exercise classes or growing their own vegetables in raised flower beds on site, but now they're branching out into the wider community.

Recently, Janet White and Patty Butler, Chartwell Hollandview's Retirement Living Consultants, made two deliveries to local seniors, laden down with fresh fruits and veggies thanks to a new partnership with Kettleby's Round the Bend Farm. Round the Bend Farm, a Community Shared Agriculture Program (CSA), offers to deliver fresh fruits and vegetables grown on their farm to people in the community taking part in the CSA program, whether it is a full-share, a mid-share, or a personal share. When Chartwell Hollandview first got wind of the opportunity, the team immediately thought it would be a good fit for local seniors with whom they have been in touch, but are not yet ready to move into the retirement community and take advantage of the services they offer.

"We are in contact with seniors who are living in their homes throughout Aurora and the surrounding areas and there is always a concern for seniors living on their own to eat well," says Ms. White. "We thought it would be a really nice tie-in to deliver a bin of fresh fruits and vegetables to their homes once a week. We thought we would start with one bin a week which can actually be divided into two. We're now delivering to two seniors per week and this program runs through November.

"It will vary weekly based on what was coming in seasonally on the farm, but in the first bin we received there were incredible radishes, beets, asparagus, fresh apples, zucchini, and there will be different types of lettuces and there may be potatoes at some point."

Unfortunately, the first senior they delivered to wasn't home to receive the basket in person and, therefore, give the women a chance to gauge how their basket was received, but they are confident that when it was found on their doorstep it was a nice surprise.

"We have always reached out to the local agriculture community through supporters," notes Ms. White. "When we first opened, it was the Aurora Farmers' Market and we hosted them once in our parking lot and we still take a bus of our seniors to the Market. We also have our garden area here at Hollandview, our Victory Garden, where residents do look after their own gardens and some of them do plant fruits and vegetables. We want to promote that in our community as well.

"This program is a win-win because we're able to really support Round the Bend Farm. They have such a wonderful program and it is going to help so many out in the community. Right now, we will just leave this at one bin every week for us. What we would like to do is share this idea with our sister Chartwell properties in the area as well. We're going to be the test run and see how it goes and show how it is going to help seniors who are living at home. If we're successful, then we might be able to branch out to other properties."

Adds Ms. Butler: "We can help others who maybe can't get out of their own homes have the opportunity to either buy or find fresh produce or fruit. This is a nice way of bringing it to them and making sure that they are staying healthy throughout the summer and enjoying fresh food."

?Eat well to stay well,? says Ms. White.

Round the Bend Farm bills their CSA Food Share program as ?a great way to eat fresh, seasonal food. It allows you to know where your food comes from, how it is grown and as such supports your local farmers. Being health conscious you can enjoys cooking meals using healthy farm fresh vegetables and fruits.?

They offer family shares, half shares and personal shares.