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Clare Oaks Garden Provides Oasis of Delicious Tastes

BARTLETT, IL – The focus on fresh, locally-sourced foods and the farm to table concept have been part of an emerging trend in restaurants, grocery stores and the culinary industry across the country. At Clare Oaks, the premier retirement living community in northwest Chicago, residents are getting a taste of this freshness focus firsthand – and it's delicious.

Algis Paulius, executive chef at Clare Oaks, has planted and cultivated a wonderful kitchen garden at the property, and is incorporating his harvest into many of the menu items he and his team prepare for Clare Oaks residents. The garden includes many types of herbs, vegetables, and salads, including peppers, tomatoes, Asian eggplant, and more. For Paulius, the garden is a way to provide the freshest possible ingredients, continue to focus on local sourcing, and to keep his menus, well, fresh.

"We are cooking for a family of 200 people," he said. "When you are cooking for family, you want to make the meals extra special."

Paulius and the culinary team certainly have a handle on making things special at Clare Oaks. The team prepares signature Birthday Dinners every month for residents, and holiday dinners are always a highlight for residents and staff alike. Making memorable meals for such a large audience is nothing new for Paulius, who was formerly an executive chef at the University of Chicago and has worked at restaurants, hotels and resorts across the country. Still, there is plenty of planning and creativity involved.

"It's fun because it's never the same. We're planning and preparing three meals a day, so I like to change the menu every few months," Paulius said. "I like to

be creative with spices and our own sauces and soups. Summer is such a fun time because we're grilling and slow-cooking, and because we are tending to the garden and developing new menu ideas based on what is growing."

According to Beth Welch, Clare Oaks Chief Executive Officer, the exceptional quality of the dining is just part of what makes the atmosphere at Clare Oaks unique.

"The dining room and the dining experience are a central part of the social fabric of our community," she said. "It's far more than the convenience of having someone prepare delicious meals for you. Our residents enjoy the camaraderie and the socialization with their neighbors. They'll gather together in the lounge area before dinner, and there is a real energy in the room. Then, they'll have dinner together and laugh and talk over a great meal. It's community, it's comfortable and it's home."

Clare Oaks was founded by the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis. Located on a beautiful 41-acre campus set in Bartlett, the Continuing Care Retirement Community offers a selection of independent living apartments and cottage homes, assisted living apartments, and skilled nursing at the Assisi Health Care Center. Clare Oaks was recently awarded a five-year term of Accreditation from the Continuing Care Accreditation Commission (CARF-CCAC), the nation's only accrediting body for continuing care retirement communities and similar organizations.

Residents at Clare Oaks enjoy fantastic amenities, including gourmet dining, recreation and educational activities and a variety of social, cultural and entertainment events, all surrounded by nature's lush, wooded beauty.

Opened in 2008, Clare Oaks provides a complete spectrum of care to seniors, with assured access to assisted living, memory care, skilled nursing and rehabilitative services. The outstanding and fulfilling lifestyle at Clare Oaks gives residents the opportunity to age in place in an environment of their choosing. Seniors select a residence for their current lifestyle, and gain the ability to change their level of care should the need arise.

For more information, visit www.clareoaks.com or call (630) 372-1946.