We’re always delighted when we hear about a gardener’s crop of this or that doing well this season, but what really makes us smile is when we’re lucky enough to watch a gardener herself learn, grow and then pay it forward. It’s a trend we’ve noticed: passionate gardeners who discover the many benefits of gardening—fabulous produce, some time to unwind while enjoying the outdoors, a chance to be out in the neighborhood and chat with people passing by, a friendlier grocery bill, etc.—who then develop a strong commitment to sharing those gifts with others by giving back to Growing Places as a volunteer.

Darlene is just one such person. After receiving a GP garden in 2012, she’s given it her all—battling groundhogs, constructing a small greenhouse and generally putting buckets of energy into tending. Now, Darlene is sharing some of that passion for gardening with our Teaching Garden participants. Volunteering weekly on Sundays, she shares the knowledge she’s gained and models the ever-curious mind of the successful gardener who always wants to know more.

What a gardening rock star!