

Jane Kennedy Excellence in Aging Award Honoree – Gary Cyrus

For more than 20 years, Gary Cyrus has worked for the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services. Over the course of these years, professionals throughout the Aging Network in North Carolina have come to rely on Gary's expertise. Among Gary's strengths is also the ability to be a teacher and mentor, who encourages leadership and personal growth. Many find that the easiest solution is to just give the answer and be done; however, Gary's preference is to guide and to teach individuals so that they have the knowledge and ability to independently solve problems.

He not only has the best interest of the State of North Carolina, but also of the citizens that call North Carolina home. In asking other AAA Directors for their thoughts, one AAA Director recalled a time that Gary helped arrange a car repair after hours and stayed to make sure she was safe. Another reported that during one of the toughest professional tasks that she was asked to do, Gary traveled from Raleigh to be present and offer support. He did not usurp her authority, but stood behind her with unfaltering support.

In addition to serving the state of North Carolina, Gary is very involved in his community and church. Gary works through the Tabernacle Baptist Church Garden Committee to plant and care for a community garden that will provide food for the church and for those in the community in need. Through the Baptist men, Gary has built ramps and done yard work for older adults who are homebound. Gary also volunteers at a homeless shelter where he serves meals once a month.

“He is the silent strength that stands firmly behind each one of us, and it is that strength that allows us to go out to conquer the battles of the day. It is with great pleasure the North Carolina Association of Area Agencies on Aging nominate such a deserving candidate.”

