

Awarded For Devotion To Others

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ATLANTA, Ga.

— Most places won't find an employee as devoted and hardworking as Vernon Nelson of ResCare. Nelson has been bestowed a Direct Support Professional of the Year Award by the American Network of Community Options and Resources (AN-COR). He has been a devoted and hardworking employee of ResCare for 13 years.

Nelson is an employee who goes above and beyond. He regularly supports and assists individuals in meeting their goals. He is devoted to developing



Photo Contributed

Vernon Nelson

DEVOTION

trusting relationships with the people he supports and his peers. Nelson puts those he supports first, even if it forces him out of his comfort zone. He does what he can to ensure that each person in his care is living their best life.

"I love working as a Direct Support Professional here at ResCare. I have been working here for several years and love the individuals I serve daily. I take pride in knowing I make a difference in someone's life every day," Nelson said. "Working in this field is near and dear to my heart because I have a son and a daughter with special needs, and I care for them daily. I treat the individuals I serve with dignity and respect, like my children."

Nelson attends the annual individual support plan meetings with the residential manager. He does this to familiarize himself with each individual's goals and then does what he can to help ensure they can meet those goals. Nelson makes sure to involve his charges in their local communities such as taking them shopping, going on weekend outings and transporting them to and from the day program.

"Most individuals I serve do not have family, so I try my best to make them feel a sense of belonging. If they do have fam-

ily, I make sure they keep that connection even if I need to go out of my way to make sure that happens," Nelson said. "For example, one of the individuals I served, Father is in a nursing home; I take him to visit his father during the holidays and birthdays. Lastly, I do what I do for individuals because when I was in school, I was labeled as a slow learner, and someone spent time with me. I was able to make the honor roll and graduate at the top of my class. I am always striving to make a difference in the lives I serve. Most importantly, make sure they have the opportunity to live their best life."

Nelson exemplifies leadership. Recently, the group home was short-staffed. He took on extra shifts to make sure those in his care had what they needed. Nelson is an asset to his coworkers, taking the time to

help the residential manager train new employees. He does his best to help coworkers and takes the time to answer their questions.

Nelson provides a sense of calm and peace in the home, those in his care and his peers know that they can trust and rely on him.

Since 2007, the American Network of Community Options and Resources has annually bestowed Direct Support Professional of the Year Awards to professionals who exemplify excellence in the field of direct support to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Every year AN-COR honors around five dozen DSPs which include a national award, state and territory-specific awards and special category awards.