

Kris Housel

Kris Housel is a lifelong Greeley resident and a graduate of Greeley West High School. He was raised by his parents and sisters, living with his sweet mother until her passing a few years ago. He then moved in with his sister and brother-in-law not far from the family home. Kris has cerebral palsy, but that doesn't slow him down much. He has a very busy social life, not to mention, he works full time at likely the busiest grocery store in town.

Kris is an avid sports fan, supporting all Colorado professional teams, and the University of Northern Colorado. In fact, one of his most favorite things to do during his free time is to watch ESPN, his favorite sports app. Kris never misses a game or highlight reel, particularly with UNC football and their new head coach, Ed Lamb...Go Bears! He enjoys riding his bike and when the weather is good, it is his primary mode of transportation to and from both work and local activities. With his recent acquisition of an e-bike, his travels now extend to neighboring cities.

Kris has been successfully employed for over 40 years with a career spanning employment with Hospice Palliative Care, a local radio station, a local family-owned grocery store prior to its closing, and most recently as a Courtesy Clerk and Cashier at King Soopers for 14 years in November 2023. Kris's gregarious personality and multi-generational family ties in the Greeley community has made him a bit of a local celebrity. Kris loves his community, "as the people are friendly and care."

So, it isn't a wonder that he eventually found himself participating in civic service through the Commission on Disabilities where he learned about a board vacancy with The Arc of Weld County, that was 12 years ago. Since then, Kris has served as the Board President for 8 years and will transition to Past President in January 2024. Most recently, he has become the chapter representative for our agency on the board for The Arc of Colorado. In addition to his work at the local chapters, Kris is also a representative on The Arc of US's National Council of Self-Advocates. In his role, Kris shares his lived experience as a person with IDD while counseling our local, state, and national chapters on how to better support people with disabilities.

Kris also represents his community with a deep involvement with the Greeley Area Chamber of Commerce at monthly Common Grounds meetings with local decision makers, as "a lot can happen over coffee," as well as a member of the newest class of Leadership Weld County, a year-long immersive program for emerging leaders throughout the region. Kris is very excited to see where these new endeavors will lead him as he crusades on behalf of all people with disabilities. "I know what it feels like to feel like you are not heard, I want to help people be heard."

In the past, Kris used his smartphone and laptop of which he is very familiar with both. Kris received his laptop in 2021 from The Arc of Weld County's Inclusive Technology Access program, after his Mac Book stopped working. Through tech coaching during 2021 and 2022, he has successfully made the transition between the use of two very different operating systems, and that is no easy feat.

Kris is very busy and finds his current use of technology to manage his many commitments isn't effective. Kris has been supported to sync his calendar and iPhone, so he can track information via calendar invites more carefully. Also, this year, The Arc of Weld County transitioned all board activities to a portal system (found inside dropdown menus on our agency website) and Kris participated in an inclusive board training in April.

Email and calendar management is very important, as most of Kris's civic engagements require extensive schedule management and oftentimes virtual meetings. Additionally, as Kris is very busy and works most weekday mornings, he finds his eyes are tired from working and by the evening struggles to access email content to prepare for virtual meetings. Kris is self-taught the read aloud function and uses this to review his emails and in preparation for his many virtual meetings. The use of the read aloud function was a feature Kris had not used in the past and he found to be very helpful. He intends to use this regularly.

Kris also plans to receive ongoing tech coaching regarding hyperlinks, passwords, and computer updates, as those can “throw him for a loop” from time to time. He continues to be patient and advocates for himself by asking for help as needed. “It feels good when you figure something out. Kris has a bit more peace of mind now that he better understands his technological needs and resources.