

Cesar has been a member, volunteer and past employee of The Arc of Weld County for over a decade and his continued engagement demonstrates the multitude of opportunity our agency provides to our community members. As a previous Office Assistant, Cesar demonstrated his aptitude and interest in computer work years ago. In fact, many of his electronic forms are still used at our organization today, long since he moved onto other employment opportunities.

This year, Cesar received a Chromebook via our Inclusive Technology Access Fund and immediately discovered the ease at which it made his participation in virtual opportunities, a significant improvement from the use of his older smartphone. Cesar has a natural aptitude for technology and with his new device he was eager to join our agency's technology coaching opportunities. Cesar is now learning how to use technology to expand his personal interests and further participate in his community as he self-determines.

Cesar is very involved with Check-in with Friends, our chapter's virtual self-advocacy group that meets twice monthly to remain connected during these continued difficult times. During those visits, participants are supported in learning about technology that is relevant to their interests and daily lives. At one such meeting, Cesar learned to download apps and specifically a local weather app. As Cesar enjoys being outdoors and walking around town, the weather app allows him to better plan for his day, particularly as the seasons begin to change. Cesar now understands how to determine what apps might be useful or of interest to him, where to access such apps and how to download these to his personal device. Specifically, to the weather app, he is fully independent in use, having had no experience prior to tech coaching.

Cesar's desire to be out and about extends far beyond his immediate community, as he is passionate about travel. In fact, he is multi-lingual and cherishes the opportunity to share his experiences and knowledge with others. Also, through his engagement with Check-in with Friends, Cesar learned how to be a virtual presenter, for which he presented about Paris, France and Colorful Colorado. Although he did not physically create the presentation, he learned how slides can be shared via the screen share function and provided thoughtful engagement for his peers. He enjoys planning for his next presentation with intentions to learn more skills regarding the creation of PowerPoint presentations.

Cesar also participated in The Arc of Weld County's Code Ninjas 4-week class and learned how to create code for video games. A little-known secret about Cesar, is while he was working at The Arc of Weld County, he shared that he hoped one day to learn coding and maybe use it for future employment. He really embraced this innovative opportunity and, with limited verbal direction during the first session, he took off making his own creations. He continues to enjoy challenging himself and improving his skills with Scratch, the coding program, as it is accessible on-demand via the internet. He has also expressed interest in continued coding opportunities in the future.

However, the coaching opportunities that possibly impacted Cesar the most were the workshops co-hosted with Connections for Independent Living. Cesar has a natural interest in technology but sometimes doesn't quite know where to start. The tech workshops focused on tech opportunities that he was much less familiar with, such as Gmail use, Microsoft Word, and telehealth. Although Cesar was excited and learned from

every session, he likely benefited the most from the telehealth session. Even with so much transition to virtual engagement, Cesar was unaware of telehealth options. He was very interested in understanding more, as he self-disclosed at times he experiences significant anxiety when preparing to travel via bus to medical appointments. He believes this option could ease his apprehension and maximize his self-care and health management. A bonus from this session was Cesar met a new friend, who recognized him from the city bus, and shared she would be delighted to support Cesar during his transportation time; perhaps even when he is feeling anxious about attending an in-person appointment.

These opportunities have really supported Cesar in his technology experience and growth. Cesar now reports he is more comfortable with technology and looks forward to using it more to maintain his community involvement. In fact, he is eagerly awaiting the arrival of his newly purchased smartwatch; he is certainly more comfortable with technology indeed!