

Resident Profile Series: Jesse Lopez

Navy veteran Jesse Lopez has known significant suffering in his life. In 1981, he became confined to a wheelchair and then lost his 23-year-old daughter in 2016. Despite these losses, Jesse finds ways to contribute positively to Rocky Mountain Communities' Mountain Terrace apartments in northeast Denver, where he lives.

"Everyone's my friend. I try to help out where I can," says Jesse.

Originally from north Denver near Sloan's Lake, Jesse has lived at Mountain Terrace for 10 years and says he knows most of the folks there.

"I've watched kids grow up here and come back with kids of their own," explains Jesse.

Jesse lives in a two-bedroom apartment that he shared with his daughter until 2016 when she passed away. He says the staff at Mountain Terrace were very understanding about his desire to stay in that apartment despite it just being him.

"They understood this is where I lived with her," says Jesse.

That's not the only thing the Mountain Terrace staff has helped Jesse with. Mara Waldruff, the resident services manager, put in hanging planters so Jesse could reach and plant flowers on his own. He planted tulips, among other things.

In addition to growing things, Jesse likes to cook. At home, he makes his specialties: green chili and smothered burritos. He's also trying his hand at different kinds of sweets which he does at one of a few classes he takes at the Rocky Mountain MS Center in Westminster. Since some programs have begun to open up again, he's started to attend several times a week. He takes one class on crafting, a second about world events, one on how to make things that glow in the dark and then the dessert class where he's perfecting a banana daquiri.

Jesse keeps busy with his classes, spending time with his rescue Chihuahua, Rosie, and tending to his flowers. All of this as he does his best to be a good neighbor and participate in his community.

Maybe that's the secret to his resilience.