

PUBLICATION

Baker Donelson Spends a Day in Alex's Wheels

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For more than 50 years, Firm client Permobil has developed and manufactured assistive mobility devices for people with disabilities. In 2019, the Nashville office partnered with Permobil to "spend a day in the wheels" of Alex, a wheelchair user and the founder of Spend a Day in My Wheels. Team Alex challenges participants to go about their daily lives using a wheelchair in hopes of opening the public's eyes to the difficulties that people who use wheelchairs face every day. These activities include navigating workspaces, locating accessible parking, using the restroom and water fountain, and using a vending machine. Team Alex's goal is to make the world more accessible to everyone.

When asked about her experience with Team Alex, legal assistant Kaitlyn Russell admits that it opened her eyes to how much we take for granted; she was shocked by how difficult it was to perform "easy" tasks such as getting a cup of coffee, grabbing something from the printer, using the bathroom, and heating up her lunch. The difference is that at the end of the day, our Baker Donelson participants were able to get up and walk away. She mentioned that she would recommend this exercise to any office that's considering taking the challenge.

Information management coordinator Caleb McFadden also participated in the challenge and noted that even getting coffee was more difficult than he expected it to be. "I didn't plan ahead how I would carry a cup of coffee to my desk from the kitchen when both hands were required to move the wheelchair. I couldn't even grab a coffee mug on my own. I eventually found a box lid that I used as a tray to carry things on," recalls Caleb, "I learned first-hand that buildings should do a much better job of being accessible to people who use wheelchairs." Caleb also mentioned that everyday tasks proved to be quite difficult when he was using a wheelchair and using heavy doors, particularly those with key card entry, required some creativity in order to pass through. He remembers being physically exhausted by the end of the day and guarantees he won't forget that feeling any time soon.

Gaines Harvey, business development coordinator, agrees that spending a day in Alex's wheels was a staggering experience. He recalls being especially challenged to pass over an uneven surface in his wheelchair that he had never noticed before while walking. Even more challenging was the fact that he was on an urgent deadline that required him to wheel between the four floors of our Nashville office. Gaines also noticed and was stunned by the number of people who stared at him simply because he was using a wheelchair.



Other participants included Ali Ferro (business development manager), [Brian Pike](#) (attorney), and [Adam Severson](#) (chief marketing and business development officer).

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