

# THE **adjoiner** MONTHLY

CREATING **LIMITLESS** PATHWAYS

FEBRUARY 2026 EDITION  
THE LATEST ADJOIN NEWS

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

BY: Wendy Forkas

### People, Purpose & Progress- Kicking Off 2026 Strong

2026 is already off to an exciting and energetic start, and it's all thanks to you—our incredible team members who continue to bring our mission to life every single day.

This past month, we've had a strong focus on our **PEOPLE**, **CONNECTIONS**, and **GROWTH**. One highlight was attending the Chula Vista ARTE Open House and ribbon cutting—what an amazing event! We had the opportunity to meet the Mayor, connect with both long-standing team members and even a visiting team member from Orange County. Seeing that level of engagement, pride, and community was truly inspiring!

And let's hear it for our HR team—Benefits! Benefits! Benefits! Open enrollment came with enhancements to our medical plans, all while keeping costs steady for our team members. That's no small feat, and it reflects our continued commitment to supporting you.

We also held a highly engaging Board Strategic Planning Meeting, where we leaned into meaningful conversations about what we should start, stop, and continue doing as an organization. The level of Board engagement and collaboration was energizing and sets a strong direction for the future.

My travels took me to Fresno, where I toured a new office space that will soon be home to an exciting new ARTE program—another step forward in expanding our impact.

On the innovation front, I partnered closely with our COO and Business Development Manager to kick off digital marketing efforts for Path-Now. The momentum is real—over 100 new accounts have been created since the start of the year!

As we look ahead, there's so much more growth and opportunity on the horizon. None of this would be possible without each of **YOU**. Your dedication, compassion, and commitment to excellence make all the difference.

Thank you for all that you do—you are the heart of our mission.



Wendy Forkas, CEO

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**ALAN WILLARDSON**  
Vice Chair

**POPEH ZEINALI**  
Secretary

**KENNETH MAZO JR**  
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**KIM MCNEALY**  
Director

**JOANN WILKINSON**  
Director

**ROBERT WILSON**  
Director

# LIVE WORK LEARN PLAY

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## CORPORATE SAN DIEGO

Victoria has been with Adjoin for nearly a year and a half. She plays an important role in supporting fundraising efforts, grant writing, and partnership development. She enjoys working collaboratively and is always eager to learn new skills. Outside of work, Victoria loves traveling with her family, taking her dog on new adventures, and supporting friends who have launched their own nonprofit organizations. Fun fact: Her mom used to work here!

### Employee Spotlight



**VICTORIA**  
COMMUNITY IMPACT MANAGER



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USI hosted an Adjoin Appreciation Happy Hour for our team at NOVO Brewing in Mission Valley!



Happy Birthday  
Becki & Pat!

Victoria continues to represent Adjoin Veterans at SeaWorld during their Military Appreciation Weekends! It is great to connect with park goers and share the great work Adjoin does!



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 **veterans** SAN DIEGO & IMPERIAL COUNTY



Team Member Marian and her family enjoyed a free trip to the symphony to watch the classic Peter and the Wolf!



 **catalysts** VISALIA

DSP Gracie received Spark Luminary Award. Well-deserved for your hard work and dedication!

Sal celebrated Valentine's Day with his stunning shades and gift from his friend Glen. Along, with a box of delicious Chocolates gifted by Shawna.



Happy Birthday Richard, Delia & America!

We celebrated Sidney and Pete, their Birthday surrounded by friends!



Tanya attended Night to Shine!



Stephanie enjoyed a beautiful day at the park!



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## **catalysts** STOCKTON

The Butterfly Club helped client Jose pay for some much-needed dental work in order for him to live comfortably!



The Butterfly Club helped client Steven pay for his behind-the-wheel drivers ed classes and test which he passed! He studied for almost a whole year which payed off!



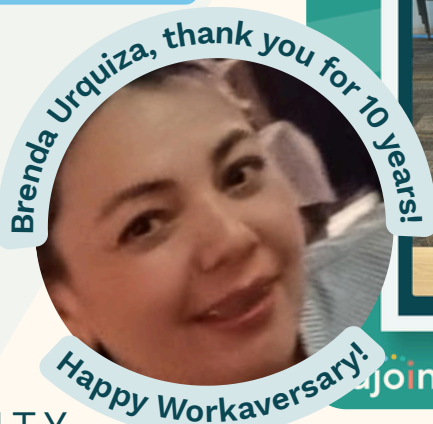
## **catalysts** IMPERIAL VALLEY

Becky has demonstrated remarkable growth and progress on her goals. Becky's participation and overall engagement have been exceptional. She is funny, affectionate, intelligent, and an absolute joy to be around. Becky has a special way of brightening everyone's day with her humor and warm personality.

### Client Spotlight



BECKY



## **catalysts** ORANGE COUNTY

We did continue to see our office hit budgeted hours for a second consecutive month. Meaning our clients are being seen and supported. We opened a new position, DSC, and are looking to fill shortly.

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## catalysts MERCED

Valentines Day and other February fun!



Happy Birthday Russell!



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 **catalysts** SAN DIEGO

ARTE had their grand opening with the Mayor of Chula Vista and the Chula Vista Chamber of Commerce!



Happy Birthday Vanessa Durry & Kimbery!!



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 **catalysts** FRESNO



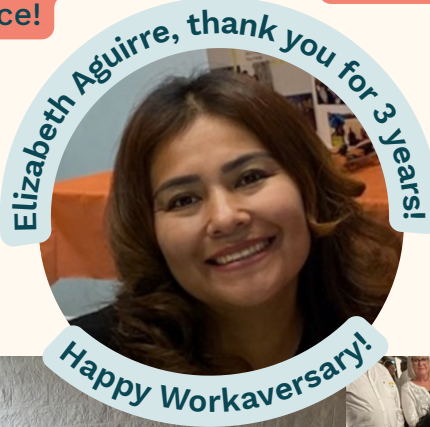
Ryan and his friends enjoyed rides in classic cars at the Valentines Day dance!



Ryan loves giving out hugs and smiling with all the staff making them apart of the night too!



Clients enjoyed lunch at the park hanging out while doing arts and crafts!



Elizabeth Aguirre, thank you for 3 years!

Happy Workaversary!



Happy Birthday  
Mardine, Richard,  
Johnny, Bao,  
Shireka & Jessica!



Clients enjoyed the Valentine's Day dance that evening dancing the night away!

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## ANNIVERSARIES TEAM MEMBERS

- 22** Jeannie Leuma San Diego
- 10** Brenda Urquiza Imperial Valley
- 7** Johnny Benavidez Fresno  
Cecilia De Lucas Imperial Valley
- 4** Taylor Kafer Veterans  
Kaila De Alba Fresno
- 3** Deanna Gonzales Stockton  
Dortorea Madison Merced  
Annette Riccio Veterans  
Elizabeth Aguirre Fresno

- 2** Tina Garcia Stockton  
Amy Noda Veterans  
Jonathan Castaneda Visalia
- 1** Sofia Salazar San Diego  
Lilian Hernandez Imperial Valley  
Belen Sanchez Imperial Valley  
Gabriela Perez Visalia  
Shannon Sackos Orange County  
Gabriel Pizano Visalia  
Sokunthary Sokhon Fresno



## ANNIVERSARIES CLIENTS

- 29** Teresa T. San Diego
- 26** Yvonne G. El Centro
- 19** Cinthya A. Fresno
- 18** Anthony B. San Diego
- 14** Carmina D. San Diego  
Victor A. El Centro
- 10** Larisha V. Stockton
- 9** Socorro F. El Centro  
Ernest C. El Centro  
Ruben H. El Centro
- 8** Luis R. El Centro
- 7** Avery Q. San Diego
- 6** Tamirat C. El Centro
- 5** Navneet G. Stockton
- 4** Lindsey M. San Diego  
Crispin G. El Centro  
Christina G. El Centro  
Marco Q. San Diego
- 3** Giovanni C. San Diego  
Vivian J. San Diego  
Gianna R. San Diego  
Desiree M. El Centro  
Christina G. Visalia
- 2** Adolfo R. El Centro  
Lynette C. OC  
Jason C. Fresno  
Jose F. Visalia  
Martha F. Visalia
- 1** Lisa D. El Centro  
Skylar B. Fresno  
Jesus B. Visalia  
Manuel G. Stockton  
Amari D. Stockton  
Jocelyn A. Stockton  
John V. Stockton

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## SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

## BUILDING A PROFESSIONAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

### Professional Behavior

Adjoin does not tolerate staff engaging in any harassment or intimidation of employees, clients, or others. This behavior carries the consequence of disciplinary action, up to termination - extends to social media.



### Gambling

All gambling, including gambling "pools" are prohibited at all offices, work sites, and with or in the presence of a client.



### Soliciting for Donations / Gifts

Posting or soliciting for donations, gifts, birthdays, sponsorships, or other purposes at a work site or to clients is prohibited, except with prior written approval from CEO/designee.



### Distribution of Literature

Distributing / posting non-work literature in working areas or during working time is also prohibited.



# LIVE WORK LEARN PLAY

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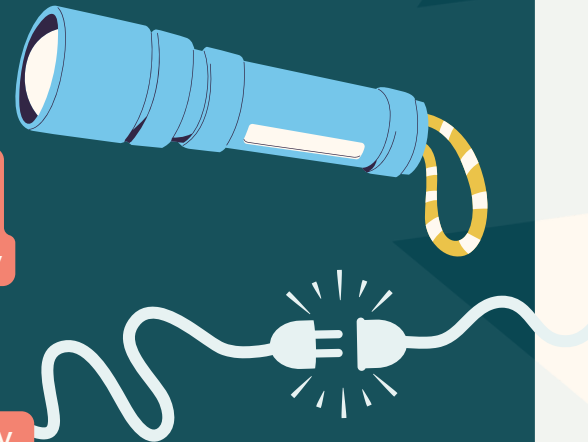


## POLICY OF THE MONTH

## POWER OUTAGE PROCEDURES

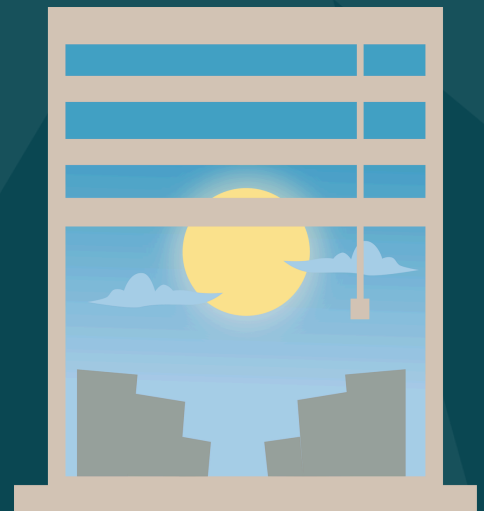
### PREPARE AND PLAN

- Keep a flashlight on hand in case of a power outage.
- If a power outage occurs, turn all devices completely off, and refrain from opening the fridge or freezer.
- For our Corporate office, call System as early as possible to ensure the Servers are shutdown properly.



### SEASONAL RESPONSE

- In the warm of Summer, close window shades and blinds, and ensure water is available.
- In the colder Winter months, open the shades to allow sun and warmth in. Keep an extra layer available just in case.



### KEEP IN CONTACT

- If a supervisor is not in-office and staff feel it's necessary to leave the building, staff will inform the supervisor that they are leaving the building and will call / check back in 60 minutes to see if power has been restored.
- Community Resource Binders are available in each office for accessing community services during an extended outage.



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 **TEAM ENGAGEMENT** WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

Submit your ideas to [sparktank@adjoin.org](mailto:sparktank@adjoin.org)!

The Spark Tank is a standing committee of Adjoin team members who serve as an intermediary between all levels of the organization and leadership to help identify gaps, explore opportunities, and create solutions that can enhance the services Adjoin provides.



**Olivia is Adjoin's Chief Compliance Officer!**

Any grievances can be directed to Olivia Blaylock at [olivia.blaylock@adjoin.org](mailto:olivia.blaylock@adjoin.org)

**Submit an anonymous comment on the Adjoin Team page!**

All team members can access the Team page on the Adjoin Website and submit an anonymous comment at the bottom of the page.

[adjoin.org/team](https://adjoin.org/team)

**What is on your mind? Send Adjoin anonymous feedback or your great idea!**

MESSAGE \*

Please enter your comments.

e.g. The reason for my anonymous message is...

SEND ANONYMOUS MESSAGE

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## TEN TIPS TO USE LESS NATURAL GAS AND SAVE ON YOUR ENERGY BILL

Reducing natural gas use at home can help lower your energy bill, especially during colder months, and it's better for the environment. Check out these natural-gas-saving tips:

### 1. Block the chill.

Caulk and weather-strip around drafty doors and windows. Use a door sweep, door sock or towel at the bottom of doors with a gap. Also remember to shut your chimney flue when not in use to prevent warm air from escaping and reduce how hard your gas heater has to work.

### 2. Keep your furnace and air filters clean.

If you have a natural gas furnace, check filters once a month and replace them regularly. A dirty filter makes your furnace run longer and use more gas.

### 3. Set your ceiling fan to run clockwise.

This helps push warm air (from your gas heating system) down into the room. Better circulation may allow you to use less heat overall.

### 4. Schedule a no-cost gas appliances check with SDG&E.

Book an appointment online at [MyEnergyCenter.com](http://MyEnergyCenter.com). Select the Services tab, Services Overview and then Gas Appliances Check. Learn more at [sdge.com/GasCheck](http://sdge.com/GasCheck).

### 5. Lower your thermostat.

Try lowering your gas heating thermostat a few degrees and throwing on a cozy sweater or cuddling with your fur baby! You can also invest in a smart thermostat. Rebates are available at [sdge.com/rebates](http://sdge.com/rebates).

### 6. Keep your blinds and curtains open during the day and closed at night.

Let the sun warm your home during the day so your gas heater doesn't have to work as hard. At night, close blinds to keep heat in.

### 7. Use less hot water when you run appliances.

Only run full dishwasher loads and consider turning off heated-dry cycles. These steps help reduce the amount of hot water your gas water heater needs to produce.

### 8. Make sure your home is well-insulated.

Good insulation helps your natural gas heating system work more efficiently by keeping warm air from escaping through doors, windows, the attic or garage.

### 9. Lower your water heater thermostat.

If you have a natural gas water heater, set it to 120°F (if safe and possible). This reduces gas use to heat water and helps prevent scalding.

### 10. Use water efficiently.

Take shorter showers and wash clothes in cold water when possible. Consider installing low-flow fixtures, insulating hot-water pipes and using a water-heater timer – all of which help reduce gas use.

Visit [sdge.com/SimpleSteps](http://sdge.com/SimpleSteps) for more bill-saving and energy management resources. Actual savings obtained in each instance may vary and will depend on various factors, including geographic location, weather conditions, equipment installed, usage rates and so forth. Completing multiple energy-saving measures will not necessarily result in cumulative savings.