

THE **adjoiner** MONTHLY

CREATING **LIMITLESS** PATHWAYS

APRIL 2026 EDITION
THE LATEST ADJOIN NEWS

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

BY: Wendy Forkas

Leading the Charge: From Vision to Action

Since 2014, Leading the Charge – Collaborating for Effective Services has brought San Diego’s IDD community together—individuals, families, self-advocates, educators, providers, employers, and system partners—all in one room with a shared purpose: to learn, collaborate, and innovate. I have sat as the chair of the planning committee since its inception and every year I am amazed by the event’s impact.

This year, the event welcomed over 500 attendees—our largest gathering yet! It’s a powerful reminder that meaningful change happens when we lead with intention and come together as a community, rather than waiting for change to happen.

The goal of the event remains the same: to highlight innovative service models and empower individuals with disabilities to advocate for their needs and fully engage in their communities.

A highlight of the day was our keynote, Dani Bowman—entrepreneur, creator of DaniMation, and autism advocate—who inspired us all with her story of possibility, determination, and impact.

The event is rooted in a deep commitment to creating opportunities, strengthening systems, and ensuring every person has the support to thrive. I am grateful to be part of a community that continues to lead the charge—together.

Sincerely,

Wendy Forkas



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CORPORATE SAN DIEGO



Adjoin participated in the Annual Leading the Charge event for the IDD community! From conference planning and volunteering to tabling, Adjoin is a proud supporter of this unique conference for the community!



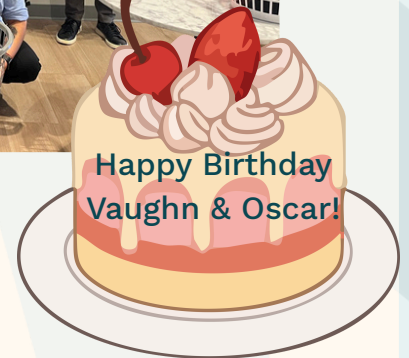
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 **veterans** SAN DIEGO & IMPERIAL COUNTY



CMR Insurance Services generously donated 50 Welcome Home baskets for our veterans moving into permanent housing! These baskets include some essential home items that everyone needs to get started. The CMR team also signed welcome home cards for each veteran to welcome them into their new space!



 **catalysts** SAN DIEGO



Self Determination Program client Jay recently got his service dog after a long process with SDR. He is learning how to care for his dog and is enjoying the companionship and ongoing training.

ARTE got a grant from SDCECO to complete their sensory corner!



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 **catalysts** SAN DIEGO



On April 11th, Adjoin several staff attended the Race for Autism 5K. IL staff Tiffany G and Jacqueline G walked the 5K alongside Tiffany's boys, while Jenny (CSS) and Reinita (DSP) represented Adjoin at the booth, sharing information and handing out swag such as pens, stickers, and temporary tattoos. The booth was full of life—staff danced, warmly welcomed visitors, and offered delicious snacks and fresh fruit. It quickly became a crowd favorite, with many stopping by just to enjoy the treats. The overall atmosphere was one of pleasure and delight, as Adjoiners came together to have fun, connect with the community, and support a meaningful cause.



Our Catalysts Social Club took a trip to Balboa Park in March. The weather was FANTASTIC. Several of the clients use public transportation that consisted of "The Sprinter", "The Coaster", Trolley and the city bus. This helps them learn how to navigate in the community and to realize that no part of San Diego is out of reach. At the Park the clients had a picnic lunch and then toured "The Museum of Art" where they explored historical art, contemporary art and some very intriguing art. After completing the tour of the "ART" they moved on to the "Botanical Garden to view the Koi and beautiful Lily Pond.



Its a Small world. While supporting our IL/TD client Rene at the DDS 2 day "Lived Experience Advisory Group" conference in SACRAMENTO, Direct Staff Diana ran into another Adjoin staff Reinita who was there supporting her son who is on the group committee.

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catalysts IMPERIAL VALLEY



catalysts MERCED



catalysts ORANGE COUNTY



Orange County has been growing slow but steady! Carlos has been supporting our newest Catalyst office and we are so glad to have him on our team!

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 **catalysts** STOCKTON



 **catalysts** FRESNO

Stefan has been with Adjoin for almost two years. With Adjoin's support, he landed an ensemble role in "Frozen" with a local professional theater company. He volunteers as an educator at the Fresno Discovery Center and leads toddler music sessions. He is also in the process of creating a Wiggles tribute band. He has also been working hard behind the scenes practicing several independent living skills. The cherry on top of his time at Adjoin is that he formed close friendships with his peers.

CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

Stefan



Mardine Walker, thank you for 10 years!



Happy Workaversary!

Happy Birthday Alfred, Tula, Guillermina, Esmeralda, Ramon, Sokunthy & Jaquiline!

Bridgett Varela, thank you for 10 years!



Happy Workaversary!

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 **catalysts** VISALIA



Happy Birthday
Esmeralda, Alejandrina,
Evelyn & Gabriela!



Jennifer Guzman, thank you for 5 years!

Happy Workaversary!



Client Rickie
celebrated his
birthday with a
Bundt Cake.

Rosemary was also celebrated for
her birthday and got a new hat!



Client Mark was seen
playing checkers with
Adjoin, adding a light
and friendly moment
to the workplace.



Clients Ruby and Tim
created a new mailbox
for team members to
nominate Adjoin clients
for the "Crushing It"
Award.



Esmeralda and Delia did
a great job supporting
outreach efforts for our
various programs at the
CVTC Transitional Fair.



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ANNIVERSARIES TEAM MEMBERS

16	Rosa Vargas	Imperial Valley	4	Jazmin Castro	Imperial Valley
13	Anita Miller	Imperial Valley		Mayra Herrera	Imperial Valley
12	Jameesa Andrews	Fresno	3	Carla Benavides	San Diego
	Victor Villalobos	San Diego		Vanessa Flores	Imperial Valley
11	Marti Daglio	San Diego	2	Maria Higuera Castaneda	Imperial Valley
10	Mardine Walker	Fresno		Alexandra Mendoza De La Torre	Imperial Valley
	Bridgett Varela	Fresno		Nayellie Ibarra	Imperial Valley
9	Karla Patino	Imperial Valley		Arturo Ramos	Veterans
	Trudy Levenson	San Diego	1	Veronica Garza	Visalia
7	Stacey Geeston Johnson	Stockton		Sheila Goodwin	Fresno
	Dominique Dias	Visalia		Shireka Williams	Fresno
5	Rachel Garcia	Imperial Valley		Johana Lozano Valenzuela	Imperial Valley
	Jennifer Guzman	Visalia		Nayely Maldonado	Imperial Valley
				Jeanine Singh	Imperial Valley
				Kali Dunaway	Merced
				Aleesa Stewart	San Diego
				Jaqueline Estrada	Veterans



ANNIVERSARIES CLIENTS

30	Diana M.	San Diego	10	Becky B.	Merced	3	Alfredo A.	El Centro
25	Rubi T.	El Centro		Jason A.	San Diego		Cynthia B.	Stockton
	Esmeralda R.	El Centro	9	Delia V.	San Diego		Brandyn M.	Merced
23	Chris B.	Stockton		Gustavo D.	El Centro		Sonny V.	El Centro
20	Peter R.	San Diego	7	Jordan W.	Merced		Paola M.	El Centro
19	Michael M.	San Diego		Erika M.	Visalia		Jeffery F.	El Centro
16	Thomas R.	Visalia	6	Pilar D.	San Diego		Cesar A.	El Centro
	Rosemary N.	Visalia		Gabriel C.	San Diego		Rascon E.	El Centro
15	Katherine B.	Merced	4	Refugio S.	San Diego		Jesus G.	El Centro
				Monica A.	Visalia		Gregory R.	El Centro
13	Jose M.	El Centro		Amelia D.	Visalia	2	Akshay S.	Stockton
				Jovanny M.	San Diego		Isaac S.	El Centro
				Jan M.	San Diego		Claudia C.	OC
				Nash N.	Fresno		Edith S.	El Centro
							Clarissa P.	El Centro

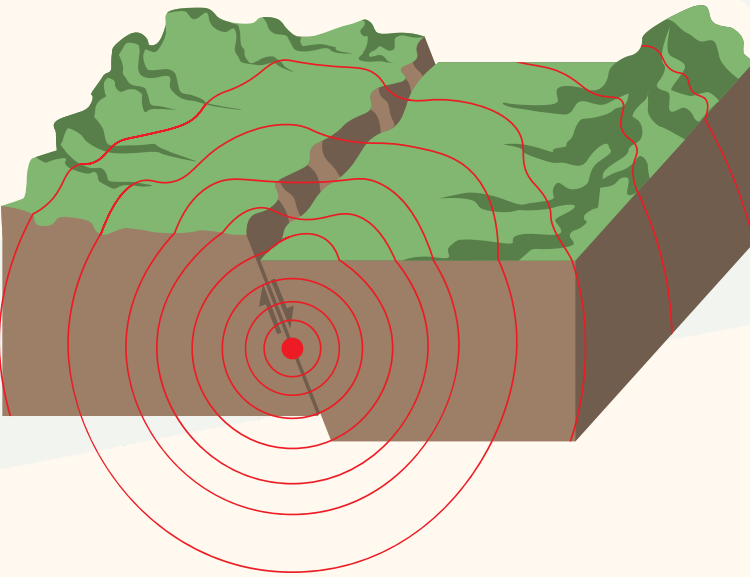
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SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

EARTHQUAKE SAFETY: PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE



Before the quake:

Prepare several days' worth of food and water, a spare flashlight, coordinate a meet-up point, and identify how to turn off your gas and electricity if applicable.

Inside during quake:

Duck and cover under a sturdy desk, or an interior corner away from windows or shelves.



Outside during quake:

Move away from sides of buildings and overhead wires. If driving, pull over to the side and stop.



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POLICY OF THE MONTH HARASSMENT PREVENTION: CREATING A RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE

OVERVIEW

- Harassment of any form is prohibited, even if the person it's directed at appears to welcome it.
- 23% of workers experience workplace harassment (Gallup, 2022).
- 30% of workers have experienced bullying at work. (Workplace Bullying Institute, 2021)



FORMS OF HARASSMENT

- Verbal
 - • name-calling, jokes, intimidation, threats, insults
- Physical
 - • Invading one's space, offensive gestures, unwelcome physical contact
- Sexual
 - • Gag gifts, comments about one's body / appearance

REPORTING PROCEDURES

- Reports should be made to one or more of:
 - Your immediate supervisor, Program Manager / Director, Human Resources, COO (Olivia) or CEO (Wendy)
- Reports involving specific individuals:
 - Submit harassment complaint in writing in envelope marked personal and confidential, and mail to Adjoin Corporate Office
 - If complaint is regarding Director of HR, the COO, the CFO, or the Board of Directors, Attention: CEO
 - If complaint is regarding the CEO, Attention: Board of Directors, Chair

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TEAM ENGAGEMENT WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK!

Submit your ideas to 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.



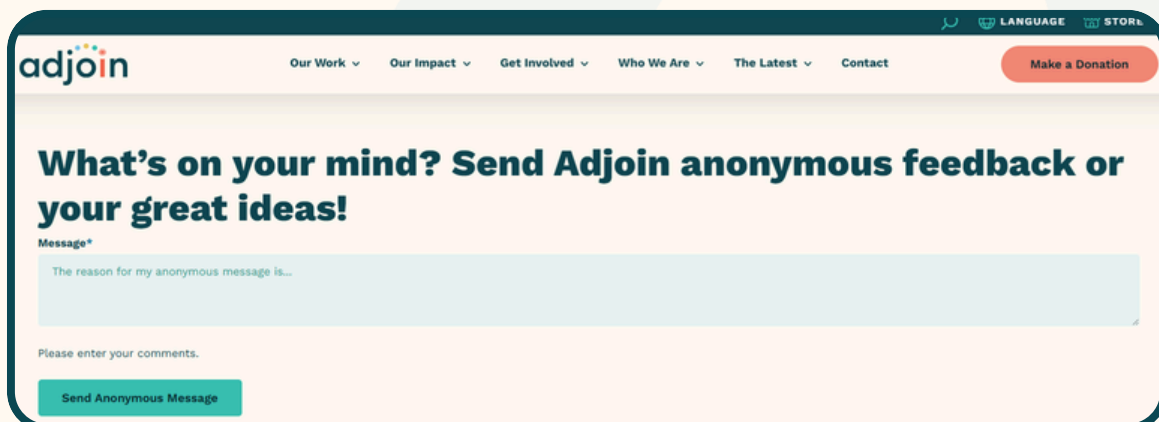
Olivia is Adjoin's Chief Compliance Officer!

Any grievances can be directed to Olivia Blaylock at olivia.blaylock@adjoin.org

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.

<https://adjoin.org/team-member-information/>



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10 CREATIVE WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY THIS SPRING

Spring is that sweet spot of the year when the weather is mild, the days get longer and the house finally feels open again. It's also the perfect time to cut back on energy use in ways that feel natural, not like a chore. Here are ten creative and effective ways to reduce energy use while enjoying the season.

1. Use "thermal zoning" with spring breezes
Instead of opening every window, open strategic pairs: one low window on the cool side of the house and one high window on the warm side. This creates a natural chimney effect that can pull air through the home, reducing the need for fans or AC.

2. Let your dishwasher bathe in spring sunshine
If you have a dishwasher with a manual dry setting, skip the heat dry and crack it open near a sunlit window. Spring sun + mild breezes = a naturally fast drying cycle.

3. Rotate rugs and furniture for better airflow
Heavy rugs and bulky furniture can block vents and air circulation. Spring is a great time to lift or rotate items to open airflow pathways; making both heating and cooling systems more efficient.

4. Use houseplants as mini humidifiers
Plants like peace lilies, spider plants and pothos naturally release moisture. A few clusters placed near sunny windows can help regulate indoor humidity, making the house feel cooler without adjusting the thermostat.

5. "Borrow" outdoor light with reflective décor
Place a mirror or reflective tray across from a bright window. This amplifies outdoor light deeper into a room, allowing you to keep overhead lights off longer in the morning and evening.

6. Set a two-month spring timer to check your fridge coils
Most people don't remember to vacuum refrigerator coils but doing it in the spring removes winter dust buildup and can reduce energy use. A simple calendar reminder makes it painless.

7. Embrace the spring "micro cooking" era
Spring fruits and veggies cook fast so, instead of heating a full oven, lean on toaster ovens, air fryers; induction burners and microwaves.

8. Wash clothes with cold water & add a dash of sunshine
Use cold water wash cycles, then hang items near open windows or in a breezy area indoors to get the freshness of line drying.

9. Create a "spring charging station" in one spot
Phantom load season is real; chargers continue to use energy even when devices aren't plugged in. Setting up a central power strip for phones, tablets, earbuds and smartwatches makes it easy to turn off everything at once.

10. Using window screens as passive cooling tools
Clean your window screens (the dust layer acts like a blanket), then slightly mist them with water during hot afternoons. As breezes pass through, they create a mini evaporative cooling effect; a natural chill without running the AC.

For more energy-saving tips, visit [sdge.com/SimpleSteps](https://www.sdge.com/SimpleSteps). 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.