



December 2025

Quarterly Newsletter

December 16, 2025

As the year comes to an end and we get ready for a fresh start, one thing stays the same: our promise to support you in your self-determination journey every step of the way. Winter is a time for reflection, planning, and connecting with others, and we are thankful to be part of your support circle as you create a life on your own terms.

In 2026, SequoiaSD will continue to support you with the same dedication you've come to count on. Whether you're setting new goals, managing winter routines, or looking forward to brighter days, we are here to help you move confidently into the new year.

Thank you for being part of the SequoiaSD family. We're excited for another year of growth, partnership, and empowerment.

— Tony Venzor, SequoiaSD Regional Growth Director

In today's email:

- Upcoming Awareness Days/Months
- New Year, New Plan: SMART Self-Determination Goals for 2026
- Employment Support for Californians with Disabilities
- Take Charge of Your Health This Winter
- Participant Spotlight: Josh's Path to Joy
- What Was School Like for Students With Disabilities Before IDEA?
- Be Kind To Your Mind This Winter
- Self-Determination Resources
- Share Your Story

2026 Payroll Schedule

Plan ahead! The new 2026 payroll schedule is posted on our website. Please review to stay on top of your pay periods and timesheet deadlines.

[View the 2026 Payroll Schedule](#)

Upcoming Awareness Days/Months

December 14 - 22 — Hanukkah

December 24 — Christmas Eve

December 25 — Christmas Day

December 31 — New Year's Eve

January 2026 — National Mentoring Month

January 1 — New Year's Day

January 4 — World Braille Day

January 19 — Martin Luther King Jr. Day

February — Black History Month

February (2nd Week) — Random Acts of Kindness Week

February 14 — Valentine's Day

February 20 — World Day of Social Justice

New Year, New Plan: Setting SMART Goals for 2026

Turn resolutions into real progress with clear, actionable planning.

Define SMART Goals:

S - **Specific:** What exactly do you want to achieve?

M - **Measurable:** How will you track progress?

A - **Achievable:** Is this goal realistic within your abilities and supports?

R - **Relevant:** Does it align with your IPOS or person-centered plan?

T - **Time-bound:** What is your timeline?

Reflection Questions:

What successes did you experience in 2025?

What challenges taught you something valuable?

What do you want to build on in 2026?

Access Employment Support for Californians with Disabilities

The California Employment Development Department (EDD) helps individuals with disabilities find and maintain employment. Through America's Job Center of California (AJCC), they offer job openings, career coaching, workshops, and community support. Programs include services for youth, the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and online tools like CalJOBS to make job searching easier.

[Explore EDD services](#)

Take Charge of Your Health This Winter

We've all seen how difficult winter illness can be, especially after recent COVID years. Protect yourself and your loved ones by getting your flu shot.

- **Get your flu shot**—many Participants qualify for free vaccines.
- **Schedule early** before clinics fill up.
- **Encourage your loved ones** to get protected, too.

[Find vaccines near you](#)

Participant Spotlight - Josh's Path to Joy, Confidence, and Creative Independence

Meet Josh! Josh Lockwood-Wewer is a vibrant, creative, Disney-loving 34-year-old whose life has transformed through Self-Determination.

If you've ever had the joy of meeting Josh Lockwood-Wewer, you quickly realize he's someone special. Towering at over six feet tall with the gentlest heart imaginable, Josh brings warmth, humor, and pure joy into every room he enters...



[Read Josh's story](#)

What Was School Like for Students With Disabilities Before IDEA?

For 50 years, the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act**, known as IDEA, has helped schools, communities, and families work together to ensure that infant, toddlers, and children with disabilities receive the special education and services they need to succeed.

[Read more](#)

Be Kind To Your Mind This Winter

As many as 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) during the fall and winter months

As daylight decreases, some people notice changes in mood or energy known as **Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)**. Feeling tired, unmotivated, or down in the winter is common—and support is available. Simple steps like getting natural light, keeping a steady routine, and reaching out for support can help make the season feel more manageable.

[Learn more](#)

Self-Determination Resources for Participants and Direct Care Workers

Find more information and additional support for every aspect of your self-determination journey, including enrollment, payroll, and government resources.

[Stay informed](#)

Share Your Story

If you know someone who has used self-determination to build a life of independence, whether through employment, community engagement, or personal growth, we'd love to share it. Your story could be the next spotlight that inspires others to dream big.

[Share your story](#)

