THE ENDEPENDENCE CENTER

December 2026 Newsletter

Opening Doors to Opportunities

Reminder: Annual Participant Holiday Party is Thursday, December 3, 12noon – 3:00pm at the Delta Hotel, 1570 N Military Highway in Norfolk. For questions, contact kkeesler@endependence.org or call/text 757-351-1569.



December ILS: Gain Confidence in Your Housing Search with the *ABCs of Housing*

Join us on Wednesday, December 2 at 2:00pm - 3:30pm for *The ABCs of Housing*, an informative presentation about affordable housing options and a helpful overview of housing programs for individuals with extremely low incomes. Topics will include how to apply for different types of housing, resources to help with your housing search, helpful application tips, and new tenant rights laws. To attend virtually, visit https://endependence.org/zoom to register.



Being Heumann Premieres on Apple TV

Being Heumann is a major motion picture that tells the story of Judy Heumann and other pioneers in the disability rights and Independent Living movement. The movie premiered on Apple TV on November 13 and highlights the historic 1977 protest when activists occupied the San Francisco Federal Building for 28 days to demand enforcement of Section 504 protections. Join us on Wednesday, December 16 from 1:00pm until 3:30pm to watch this groundbreaking film, followed by a brief discussion. ***Being Heumann* is rated R for explicit language, some drug use, intense protest scenes, and sexual content.**

***Pictured above**: Judy Heumann, July 2019 (credit: Taylordw, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons)*

December 2: Advocacy Group to Meet

Starting in the early 1990s as a means for organizations to share information and collaborate on advocacy efforts, the Advocacy Group is a way to move our agendas forward. Organizations working on disability issues are invited to join us for an Advocacy Group meeting on Wednesday, December 2, 11:00am until 12:30pm. Lunch will be provided. For questions, contact Maureen Hollowell at mhollowell@endependence.org or (757) 351-1584. **Registration is required; register online by December 1 at https://endependence.org/advocacy-group.**

Independent Living Day is January 20

Independent Living Day is an annual event that brings together advocates and people with disabilities from across Virginia to meet with legislators at the General Assembly and is an opportunity to discuss issues important to our community. The group will depart ECI at 8:30am on Wednesday, January 20 and return that evening around 6:00pm. If you are interested in participating, please contact your Independent Living Coordinator. **SPACE IS LIMITED and registration is required**.

EVENT LISTINGS

DECEMBER 2026

ECI Events

Unless noted otherwise, events are held at ECI (6300 E. Virginia Beach Blvd., Norfolk)

1st TUE **Retirement Celebration for Rena Lewis 2:00pm - 3:30pm**
Rena Lewis, Independent Living Coordinator, retired this year after more than 30 years of service to the Endependence Center and the Independent Living movement. Join us to celebrate her lasting impact on the disability community. For questions, contact Maureen Hollowell at mhollowell@endependence.org or (757) 351-1584.

2nd WED **Advocacy Group 11:00am – 12:30pm**
See page one for details.

2nd WED **Independent Living Skills Training: ABCs of Housing 2:00pm - 3:30pm**
See page one for details.

3rd THU **Annual Participant Holiday Party 12noon – 3:00pm**
See page one for details.

16th WED **Being Heumann Viewing & Discussion: 1:00pm - 3:30pm**
See page one for details.

Community Events

Transportation tickets are NOT provided to attend community events.

7th MON **PEATC Community Office Hours 9:00am – 11:00am**
For questions, call the Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC) Region 2 Family Support Specialist at (703) 923-0010 or visit https://peatc.org.

9th WED **HRT Paratransit Advisory Committee 1:00pm**
Hampton Roads Transit (3400 Victoria Blvd., Hampton)
All meetings are free and open to the public in person or via Zoom. For more information, call (757) 222-6087 or e-mail paratransitdept@hrtransit.org.

12th SAT **TOUCH Group 11:00am – 1:00pm**
Endependence Center (6300 E. Virginia Beach Blvd., Norfolk)
Join us for a conversation on living our best life. We want to end the year off on a good note and discuss how we can make this possible. For questions, contact Montrell Rodgers at 757-238-1293 or VATOUCH.22@gmail.com.

15th TUE **Participant-Led Event 12noon – 2:30pm**
Chili's Grill and Bar (4085 Virginia Beach Blvd., Virginia Beach)
This event is organized by participants.

DECEMBER 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Events subject to change. Check the ECI website and Facebook for up-to-date information. ****This event is not organized by ECI; bus and Paratransit tickets will not be provided.***		**1** **Rena Lewis Retirement Celebration** @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm	**2** **Advocacy Group** @ ECI 11:00am – 12:30pm **ILS Training: ABCs of Housing** @ ECI 2:00pm - 3:30pm	**3** **Participant Holiday Party** 12noon – 3:00pm ***ECI Closed for Participant Holiday Party***	**4** **Silent Dinner*** @ Lynnhaven Mall 5:30pm – 8:00pm	**5**
6	**7** **PEATC Community Office Hours*** @ ECI 9:00am – 11:00am	**8**	**9** **HRT Paratransit Advisory Committee*** @ TDCHR (Hampton) 1:00pm ***ECI Closed for Staff Event***	**10** ***ECI Closed for Staff Meeting 1:30pm – 4:00pm***	**11**	**12** **TOUCH Group*** @ ECI 11:00am – 1:00pm **ASL Hangout*** @ Froggie's 6:00pm – 9:00pm
13	**14**	**15** **Participant-Led Event*** @ Chili's (Virginia Beach) 12noon – 2:30pm	**16** ***Being Heumann*** @ ECI 1:00pm - 3:30pm	**17**	**18**	**19**
20	**21** ***Winter Begins***	**22**	**23**	**24**  ***ECI Closed in Observance of the Holidays***	**25**	**26**
27	**28**	**29**	**30**	**31** ***New Year's Eve***	***Reminder: New Medicaid Work Requirements Begin January 1.*** *For links for more information, visit https://endependence.org/alerts.*	

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To request an alternate format of our newsletter:
(757) 351-1598 voice
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