



Bringing People and Services Together

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# NEWS

Alliance of Information & Referral Systems  
 November 2007 Volume XXXI No. 10

## California wildfires lead to deployment for AIRS/UWA Disaster Response Team

Tricia Ferrell,  
*United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg, Assistant Vice President, Information and Referral*

On October 24, 2007, the national AIRS/UWA Disaster Response Team (DRT) co-chairs sent word to all DRT members that 2-1-1 San Diego was in need of assistance due to the exponential surge in 2-1-1 call volume. A 2-1-1 I&R center that was typically handling

300-400 calls a day was now handling 25,000 calls a day. Their staff was not only in need of assistance handling calls but managing the outpouring of community volunteers and giving their staff some much needed respite.

I arrived in San Diego on Friday afternoon and was assigned to manage the volunteers taking disaster related calls from 8pm - 8am. There were actually two DRT

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## Officers of the Corporation

*Jamie Moore, President  
Tim Sylvia, Vice President  
Roberto Armijo, Treasurer  
Georgia Sales, Secretary*

The Alliance of Information & Referral Systems, Inc., was incorporated in 1973 to improve access to human services for all people through the mechanism of information and referral. It is a member organization serving I&R interests.

The AIRS Newsletter is provided as a benefit to all AIRS members. For information about membership contact us at (703) 218-AIRS (2477).

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members assigned to this shift because of the volunteer training needs and floor supervision. 2-1-1 San Diego had partnered with "Volunteer San Diego" to be the point of entry for all volunteers to sign up for four-hour shifts at the 2-1-1 center. This process worked very well. In fact 2-1-1 San Diego processed more than 1,600 volunteers in a week and a half.

When the volunteers arrived to the center they were greeted by a volunteer receptionist and then instructed to sign contact information and confidentiality forms. Once they completed the forms the new volunteers would go to the training room for a 30-minute training session on how to answer the calls, complete the intake forms and provide the most current information to each caller. Those repeat volunteers would go straight to the make-shift call center for their four-hour shift. There were many repeat volunteers including the entire staff of the San Diego District Attorney's Office. The office was closed for business due to the fires so the DA mandated that all 60 employees volunteer their work time at the 2-1-1 center.

2-1-1 was being advertised by the news networks, radio shows, newspapers, emergency managers and City Commissioners as the number to call for all disaster related information. The types of calls that came in were general fire information (i.e. where was

the fire spreading), information on evacuation mandates (reverse 911 was in place but some individuals would call 2-1-1 to verify that it was a legitimate call before they evacuated), road closures, volunteer opportunities, shelter information, was it safe to return to their communities, water safety issues, new fires spotted and smoke sightings. There were other calls but these were some of the most frequent ones.

At first, the computers were not set up so all calls were documented on a paper intake form and the volunteers were using binders of information that would be updated as soon as new information came in. Thanks to the generosity of the City Council, IBM and others computers were operational by Oct. 27th. Now began the job of entering the over 120,000 intake forms from previous days. During my shift on Saturday, we had half of the volunteers taking calls and the other half doing data entry.

Overnight calls had slowed down quite a bit. Friday we only had about 300 and Saturday about 450. At 8am Sunday morning — the end of my shift — the decision was made to start sending the DRT members home since the call volume was going down and the fires were more contained and had moved away from residential areas. The recovery process was in full swing and the San Diego

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Emergency Management had established four Local Assistance Centers (LAC). These centers serve as a one stop center for the individuals that lost their homes to initiate the filing processes with FEMA, American Red Cross, Small Business Administration, Property Tax Reduction Information and others. As of Oct. 29th, calls were down to about 2,300 a day and the center had gone back to rolling the overnight calls to the 2-1-1 in San Bernardino County.

I feel fortunate to have been able to go to San Diego and assist when needed. I was impressed at how they were able to manage the surge of volunteers and the surge in call volume. As I work on our disaster plan I will look back on what San Diego has in place and how I can make it work in our community. The partnerships this 2-1-1 had in place prior to disaster striking were very important. Because of these partnerships staff from IBM and Northrop Grumman was staffing the center 24/7 to ensure the technology was installed and operational at all times.

The City Council lent over 60 computers to the center and dropped two additional T-1 lines and a T-3 line for the center to handle the influx of calls coming in which allowed them to handle over 25,000 calls a day. San Diego Emergency Management (SDEM) had a direct line into the 2-1-1 center to provide updates by phone and would also e-mail all information. SDEM also had included a direct link to 2-1-1 San Diego's Emergency Wildfire Web site: <http://www.211sandiego.org>

*For more wildfire news, see pages 10-11.*

# Dictionaries to be piloted in AIRS certification exams

Over the past few years, the AIRS Certification Program has received requests from people who want to take dictionaries into an examination. The need has been particularly expressed by individuals for whom English is a second or third language.

In a conversation, it is easy to confirm the meanings of certain words but in an examination, an answer may depend on the nuance of one unfamiliar written word.

After checking on other credentials and surveying certification applicants on the issue, a one-year pilot will begin Jan. 1 2008, whereby an English language dictionary will be available for all candidates in certifi-

cation examinations.

AIRS will purchase about 20 standard Miriam-Webster paperback dictionaries (identical editions) and one of these will be included in all of the proctor packages. The dictionary will be available during the exam upon request in order to look up the meaning of a particular word.

The dictionary will be returned to AIRS with the other exam material.

It is hoped that the process does not disrupt the examination experience but provides reasonable assistance for candidates needing clarity on word meanings. The pilot will then be reviewed against these criteria.

## Welcome New Members

### Individual Members

- Melinda Brown - Arlington Heights, IL
- Steven De La Vega - Jacksonville, NC
- Holly Elms - Irving, TX
- Mark H. Neuffer - Chicago, IL

### Agency Members

- Clayton County Aging Program/Senior Services - Jonesboro, GA
- Family Service Agency - Santa Barbara - Santa Barbara, CA
- Howard Center - Burlington, VT

- Illinois Department on Aging - Springfield, IL
- Lauttamus Communications, Inc. - Weirton, WV
- Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty - New York, NY
- North Shore Senior Center - Evanston, IL
- PAETEC Communications - New York, NY
- Southwest Michigan Long Term Care Connection (SWMLTCC) - St. Joseph, MI
- Southwest Suburban Center on Aging - LaGrange, IL

# Community Voice Mail empowers people

By Anna Landa,

## **CVM Program Development Coordinator**

Community Voice Mail (CVM) provides free, 24-hour nationwide voice mail to people in crisis and transition - connecting them to jobs, housing, safe communication and much more. Community Voice Mail is a voice mail delivery system with sites across the country, but is headquartered in Seattle, WA. Utilizing Cisco Systems' Unity product, messages are stored and delivered via VOIP (Voice Over Internet Protocol) for unified messaging capability.

Each CVM site around the United States is hosted by one main social or health service agency ("host agency") which is responsible for funding and managing the CVM service for the whole city/community. The host agency gives out the voice mail boxes to other local, participating agencies who then give them to clients in need of the voice mail.

The key to the program is the fact that clients receive a local telephone number at which to receive messages from potential employers, landlords and others — and case workers can utilize CVM to stay in contact with their clients, doubling the impact of the service. CVM can also be used as an information "bulletin board" by sending out broadcast messages to all users on the system. CVM programs currently use this tool to inform clients about upcoming job

fairs, free tax preparation, EITC eligibility, community health screenings, voter registration and much more.

## **Who are Current Host and Participating Agencies for CVM?**

CVM is currently hosted by a diverse mix of multi-service centers, workforce development agencies, information and referral centers, homeless coalitions, and many others. Across the CVM federation agencies including Catholic Charities, Goodwill

Industries, Salvation Army, Traveler's Aid, Volunteers of America, YMCA, YWCA, foster care agencies, health clinics and veteran's services count themselves as distributors of CVM for their local communities

either as host and/or participating agencies.

## **How Can I Start CVM in My Community?**

CVM is currently available at 38 sites across the country. A generous grant from the Cisco Systems Foundation enables us to make \$20,000 seed grants available to local agencies willing to "host" CVM for the whole community (for cities with population of 300,000 and greater).

*If you would like to discuss how to make CVM available for your community, click [here](#) to read the Request for Proposal. Please visit [www.cvm.org](http://www.cvm.org) and contact Anna Landa at [alanda@cvm.org](mailto:alanda@cvm.org) for more information.*



**In observance of the upcoming holidays, AIRS will be closed:**

**December 24th and 25th**

**January 1st, 2008**

**We wish you all a safe and happy holiday season and look forward to our continued work together in 2008.**

**AIRS Staff**

# 211s in the news across North America

## California

Stanislaus County residents can now dial 2-1-1.

<http://www.modbee.com/opinion/story/132415.html>

“A Campaign to Help Bay Area Trafficking Victims.” “Public service announcements and pole banners throughout San Francisco aim to identify victims, and urge them to call 211 to get help.”

<http://www.kcbs.com/A-Campaign-to-Help-Bay-Area-Trafficking-Victims/1222977>

“United Way has launched long-term recovery fund: Wildfire victims still in need of supplies.”

“United Way has also committed funds to bring in extra operators to staff the 211 lines ... 211 is a phone number for people who need services or for those who want to offer help.”

<http://www.thecamarilloacorn.com/news/2007/1116/Community/016.html>

“Dialing for help? 211 is the number: Hotline launches the non-emergency line for disaster aid and social services information.” San Luis Obispo joined 13 other California counties with the 211 service.

<http://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/local/story/193570.html>

“DISASTER PREPAREDNESS: IS KERN COUNTY READY?”

“Beginning in October, a national assistance line was activated in

Kern County. This referral line, using call number 211, will replace the ‘Helpline’ and provide a wide range of social service information to residents.”

<http://www.1bakersfield.com/news/read/2/151338>

“Uninsured Health Care Resources.” “For a non-emergency medical referral, call 211 ...”

<http://www.modbee.com/local/story/127229.html>

“Robinson YMCA offers free child care.” Child care will be available for children of first responders, evacuation center volunteers, SDG&E employees and 211 operators who live within certain ZIP codes.

<http://www.signonsandiego.com/news/metro/20071026-9999-1m26brfsadd.html>

“Disaster Gets Its Own Phone Number ... Some Places.” “... 2-1-1 received more than 110,000 calls -- a year’s worth -- in five days.”

[http://www.wired.com/politics/security/news/2007/11/two\\_one\\_one](http://www.wired.com/politics/security/news/2007/11/two_one_one)

“After The Fire: Your Emotional Well-Being.” Note to firefighters and rescue personnel: “Among the help available throughout Southern California is a 2-1-1 hotline. 2-1-1 is a toll-free number available around the clock to help you connect with health and human services, including crisis management and intervention referral.”

<http://lafd.blogspot.com/2007/11/after-fire-your-emotional-well-being.html>

## Colorado

“Fund lets donors stretch their dollars this holiday.” “Call 211 to place a credit card donation by telephone.”

<http://www.coloradoan.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071118/NEWS01/711180348/1002/CUSTOMERSERVICE02>

“2-1-1 responds to wildfire disasters.” AIRS and United Way have partnered to send disaster response teams to assist the 2-1-1 call centers affected by the California wildfires. Explains the role of 2-1-1.

[http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/news\\_press\\_release,212223.shtml](http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/news_press_release,212223.shtml)

## Florida

“First Call for Help will be resurrected to answer needs for social services.” “After the first of the year, 211, the round-the-clock telephone number that people in distressing situations can call for help, will be replaced by a similar referral service that will operate during normal business hours.”

<http://www.ocala.com/article/20071106/NEWS/211060347/1001/NEWS01>

“Sheriff’s Office in the spirit of giving.” Sheriff’s Office ... “organized the drive after being informed by the director of 2-1-1

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in the county that the coalition's food shelves were depleted.”

<http://www.sun-herald.com/Newsstory.cfm?pub-date=112007&story=tp10ch13.htm&folder=NewsArchive2>

**Georgia**

“The return of 211.” “This relaunch again involves the Dalton-based 211 center handling local calls and making connections.”

<http://news.mywebpal.com/partners/680/public/news854004.html>

“Agencies invited to 211 seminar.” “Jim Bradshaw, 211 Coordinator, is hosting a seminar to update local service organizations about the new database now in use at United Way of Northwest Georgia.”

<http://news.mywebpal.com/partners/680/public/news853319.html>

“United Way and Atlanta Gas Light Co. partner to help low-income homeowners.” United Way of the Coastal Empire’s 2-1-1 is now taking applications for Atlanta Gas Light Co.’s Home and Heart Warming Program.

<http://new.savannahnow.com/node/390005>

**Idaho**

“Meridian Couple Arrested for Operating Meth Lab.” The State is in need of foster parents to care for the children whose parents have been arrested. Residents urged to call the Idaho Careline at 211 for more information.

<http://www.fox12news.com/Global/story.asp?S=7294486>

**Indiana**

“You make the call - learn about 2-1-1.” Guest Columnist, Brian Gallagher, president and CEO of United Way of America, discusses 2-1-1.

[http://www.theheraldbulletin.com/columns/local\\_story\\_321163827.html](http://www.theheraldbulletin.com/columns/local_story_321163827.html)

**Maine**

“Maine Governor Unveils Measures to Help Mainers Deal with High Energy Costs.”

“Information is also available by calling the state’s information hotline at 211.”

[http://www.allamericanpatriots.com/48737592\\_maine\\_maine\\_governor\\_unveils\\_measures\\_help\\_mainers\\_deal\\_high\\_energy\\_costs](http://www.allamericanpatriots.com/48737592_maine_maine_governor_unveils_measures_help_mainers_deal_high_energy_costs)

**Massachusetts**

“United Way continues to sponsor Mass 211, an information and referral service that helps individuals find health and human services by dialing three numbers.”

<http://www.leominsterchamp.com/news/2007/1109/Neighborhoods/014.html>

**Michigan**

“DRUGS: Nonprofit helps cut costs.” A nonprofit agency has teamed up with the 211 service to provide home-delivered, brand-name prescriptions for \$5 to low-income families.

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071111/BUSINESS06/711110634/1019/BUSINESS06>

“Local United Way To Change 2-1-1 Call Center Provider.” “The Livingston County United Way is moving ahead with plans to join a different regional call center for the 2-1-1 help line.” Change to Jackson call center... “will be invisible to the public.”

<http://www.whmi.com/news/article/article5390.php>

**Minnesota**

“Noreen Dunnells, chief professional officer of the United Way of Central Minnesota, said people can call the organization’s 2-1-1 number to get help or volunteer this holiday season.”

<http://www.sctimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071125/NEWS01/111250043/1009>

**Missouri**

“Nonprofit Info Line.” Picture: Martha Love, resource specialist for the new 211 system, displays information about the system following a Nov. 13 news conference.

<http://www.sbj.net/article.asp?aID=97425776.6389477.1033929.4256064.8258231.782&aID2=79524>

“2-1-1 Phone Helpline now available in Mo.” “As of Tuesday, Nov. 13, 2007, the new 2-1-1 telephone number is available to help Missourians find fast, free and confidential help for health and human services. The 2-1-1 call center, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week is being offered throughout Missouri by the United Way of Greater St. Louis, with funding from Missouri Foundation for Health (MFH) and in conjunc-

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tion with United Way organizations throughout the state.”

<http://www.columbiatribune.com/2007/Nov/20071113News007.asp>

### **New Hampshire**

Residents of Belknap, Merrimack and Hillsborough counties will be among the first in New Hampshire to have access to one statewide human service referral source thanks to 2-1-1 NH Information and Referral Service, launched in the Granite State by the United Ways of New Hampshire.

<http://nhbr.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071114/NEWS06/7113012/-1/News06>

“Hotline up for social services.”

2-1-1 expected to be statewide by fall 2008.

<http://www.nashuatelegraph.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071119/NEWS01/311190066/-1/YOUTH>

### **New Jersey**

“Where will they sleep tonight? Local homeless shelters near capacity in cold weather.” For more information, call 211.

[http://www.hudsonreporter.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=19051557&BRD=1291&PAG=461&dept\\_id=523589&rfti=6](http://www.hudsonreporter.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=19051557&BRD=1291&PAG=461&dept_id=523589&rfti=6)

### **New York**

“New hotline connects residents to community services.” Tompkins County residents can now dial 2-1-1.

<http://www.theithacajournal.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071124/COLUMNISTS32/711240341/1002/NEWS01>

“Group pushes for local 211 hotline.” The United Way of Broome County is hoping to collaborate with Otsego, Delaware Chenango, Tioga and Broome counties on a 211 hotline for health and human services information.

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### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

**For the 2008 AIRS Training & Education Conference May 18-21, 2008, Houston, Texas**



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[http://www.thedailystar.com/local/local\\_story\\_323040037.html](http://www.thedailystar.com/local/local_story_323040037.html)

“United Way announces grant to Hudson Valley Food Bank.” “An assessment conducted by United Way concluded that ‘basic needs,’ such as food, were the number one human service issue for Dutchess County residents. About 1,000 residents declared basic needs as their highest-ranking issue in an opinion survey, and basic needs was also the number one reason people called Hudson Valley Region 2-1-1 for help.”

[http://www.dailyfreeman.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=19038518&BRD=1769&PAG=461&dept\\_id=81975&rfti=6](http://www.dailyfreeman.com/site/news.cfm?newsid=19038518&BRD=1769&PAG=461&dept_id=81975&rfti=6)

### **North Carolina**

“Nonprofits do vital service for WNC and need your support.” “Every week in Buncombe County, 750 people call 2-1-1 to find out where to get the help they and their families need.”

<http://www.citizen-times.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AIID=/20071122/OPINION03/71121091/1194>

“Referral service gets people to right place.” “United Way’s 2-1-1 of WNC is one of 54 programs funded by United Way of Henderson County. 2-1-1 of WNC is a community service information line that links people to health and human services in the community.”

[http://www.blueridgenow.com/article/20071118/NEWS/711180364/1015/OPINION02/NEWS/Referral\\_service\\_gets\\_people\\_to\\_right\\_place](http://www.blueridgenow.com/article/20071118/NEWS/711180364/1015/OPINION02/NEWS/Referral_service_gets_people_to_right_place)

### **North Dakota**

“About 50 attend Medicare event.” Help is available by dialing 211 from anywhere in the state.

Callers will reach a trained counselor who will take their information and send them different coverage options.

<http://www.jamestownsun.com/articles/index.cfm?id=57196>

### **Oklahoma**

“Helper of juveniles is showing her CARDS.” For more information on the CARDS program, call 211.

[http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/article.aspx?articleID=071125\\_1\\_A21\\_hABro64288](http://www.tulsaworld.com/news/article.aspx?articleID=071125_1_A21_hABro64288)

### **Pennsylvania**

“Capitol Matters: Hoping for the best; not the worst.” Pennsylvania legislature is considering a bill to create a 211 dialing system for human service needs ranging from assistance to seniors to people mourning the loss of loved ones. “There are hundreds of health and human services hotlines in use in Pennsylvania,” said Rep. Robert Godshall, R-Montgomery, a bill sponsor. “This legislation would bring those agencies under one umbrella, giving citizens one easy number to remember when they face a crisis.”

[http://www.thedailyreview.com/site/news.cfm?BRD=2276&dept\\_id=465724&newsid=19011629&PAG=461&rfti=9](http://www.thedailyreview.com/site/news.cfm?BRD=2276&dept_id=465724&newsid=19011629&PAG=461&rfti=9)

### **Rhode Island**

“The worst of times?” “In September, well before the holiday season got under way, a new

statewide “211” phone referral line for social services logged 9,300 calls that overwhelmingly reflected desperation.”

[http://www.projo.com/news/content/TOUGH\\_TIMES\\_SUN\\_DAY\\_11-18-07\\_NL7TAQG\\_v33.2c22c6f.html](http://www.projo.com/news/content/TOUGH_TIMES_SUN_DAY_11-18-07_NL7TAQG_v33.2c22c6f.html)

### **South Dakota**

“211 helpline information offers aid in times of crisis.” “211 is an informational, referral and crisis helpline that provides information on nonprofit, social-service and government programs, and crisis-intervention services. Callers may dial 211 at no cost, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, from their home phones or cell phones.”

<http://www.rapidcityjournal.com/articles/2007/11/12/news/local/doc4737ccdfebcb3641074732.txt>

### **Texas**

“Trying to get help through Medicare hot line leaves seniors out in the cold.” “Seniors who have problems with Medicare should try to find someone to go to bat for them. To find an advocate: Call 2-1-1 Texas Information, a free statewide service that helps find advocates for seniors. The 2-1-1 system also offers a Web site that allows a search of more than 6,000 Texas agencies. Just go to the search page at [www.211texas.org/211](http://www.211texas.org/211), enter your requests and click on search.”

[http://www.star-telegram.com/metro\\_news/story/299897.html](http://www.star-telegram.com/metro_news/story/299897.html)

### **Vermont**

“Bills add up to expected heating crisis for low-income Vermonters.”

“Vermont 2-1-1, a toll-free hotline set up by the United Ways of Vermont, says the number of calls from Vermonters seeking energy assistance has more than doubled over this time last year.”

<http://www.rutlandherald.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071125/NEWS04/711250397/1024/NEWS04>

### Washington

“Annual wish list from charities in your area.” “United Way of Snohomish County seeks to improve life for kids, families and the community by supporting non-profit programs that meet people’s immediate needs and tackle the underlying causes of problems. Programs include the 211 information line and the United Way Volunteer Center.”

<http://www.heraldnet.com/article/20071118/NEWS01/711180115&news01ad=1>

“2-1-1 celebrates one year of service.” “After almost a year in operation, the United Way of Kitsap County’s 211 service is still catch-

ing on.”

<http://www.centralkitsapreporter.com/portals-code/list.cgi?paper=93&cat=23&id=1102941&more=0>

“Call center is crucial link for those in need.” “Thurston County’s non-emergency 2-1-1 call center operation is a big success.”

<http://www.theolympian.com/opinion/story/260212.html>

“2-1-1 calls increasing across Peninsula.” “Three little numbers are producing impressive statistics for helping people across the North Olympic Peninsula.”

<http://www.peninsuladailynews.com/article/20071101/NEWS/711010305>

### West Virginia

Robin Smith has accepted a position with West Virginia 211, the statewide information and referral line.

[http://www.timeswv.com/into-dayspaper/local\\_story\\_324232842.html](http://www.timeswv.com/into-dayspaper/local_story_324232842.html)

### Wisconsin

“Information, referral service gives boost to those in need.” “This year during its second anniversary, 2-1-1, one segment of a national network, has transitioned from a four-county call center into a regional call center that serves 10 counties around the clock, said 2-1-1 manager Susan Richards.

<http://www.postcrescent.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071105/PC0101/711050478/1979>

### Ontario, Canada

“Service agency info a call away with 211.” “Whether they’re trying to learn English or struggling with drug addiction, Windsor and Essex County residents can now find out about the wide variety of public services available to them simply by dialing 211.”

<http://www.canada.com/windstar/story.html?id=d8be3aee-3ed0-4170-b494-01f65fd97cfd&k=79852>

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# Attend the AIRS Conference for free!

The application form for 2008 conference proposals is now available from the AIRS home page at [www.airs.org](http://www.airs.org).

Individuals who submit workshop proposals by January 31st, 2008, that are selected for inclusion in the conference program, will be entered into a draw for one of five free conference registrations (value \$525).

Presentations are welcome from all angles and aspects of I&R -- Disaster, Resource Databases, I&R Management, Technology, I&R Service Delivery, Aging and Disability, 2-1-1 and Military I&R.

The conference is scheduled for May 18-21 in Houston and for more info about this exciting city, check out

<http://www.visithoustontexas.com/visitors>

# Volunteering in San Diego

By Sherry Miller,  
Director, Michigan 211

**Thursday, 10/25/07** – Arrived in San Diego via Phoenix. In Phoenix, there was a family of four seated nearby. Their little girl, probably around 3 years old was tired, coughing and crying loudly. The mom apologized to the group by saying that they were from California, that their



Volunteers in action

daughter is asthmatic and has not been able to breathe in three days. They were relieved to escape. Arrived round 10:30 p.m. California time - the smell of smoke hit me as I left the terminal.

**Friday, 10/26/07** – met at 7:00 a.m. with the group - 16 are here in

San Diego from the Disaster Response Team and headed for the call center. San Diego 2-1-1 has been struck by unexpected problems – their software crashed, air conditioning doesn't work – so it's uncomfortable. The disaster call center is in a large room with tables, chairs – no computers, about 60 phones and is hot. Calls are coming in at a rapid pace. Volunteers come in four-hour shifts – usually about 50 at a time. They have 15 minutes of training and then take to the phones. Resources are updated every 30 minutes and their notebooks of information are swapped out at that time. It takes 24 minutes to swap out the notebooks. The Disaster Response Team is responsible for training, IT support, and many other functions. Volunteers are helping everywhere and coming from everywhere. Yesterday the mayor dropped in and thanked the volunteers. Got back to the motel around 9:30 p.m. – second shift is in place.

**Saturday, 10/27/07** – What a difference a day makes! Today our organizational systems, put in place yesterday, paid off. We have systems and signage in place at the volunteer reception desk including survey forms and skill inventories. Volunteers have put in nearly 5,000 hours this week. So far, in the last six days, we've taken over 115,000 calls.

Judy and I developed questions for a small focus group we facilitated this morning and learned much about their

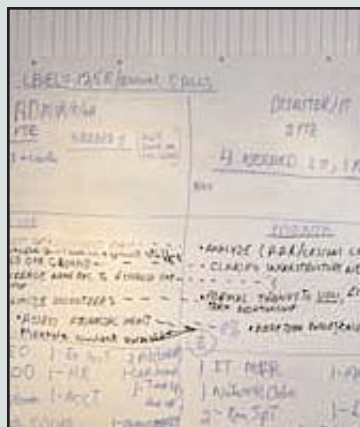
daughter is asthmatic and has not been able to breathe in three days. They were relieved to escape.

Arrived round 10:30 p.m. California time - the smell of smoke hit me as I left the terminal.

**Friday, 10/26/07** – met at 7:00 a.m. with the group - 16 are here in

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The whiteboard

volunteer experience. Returning volunteers are taking lead positions which will help 2-1-1 in the future.

**Sunday, 10/28/07** – It's easy to understand how people forget what day it is and again, what a difference a day makes! Call volume overnight decreased and 2-1-1 San Diego decided that what they really needed from our team



Volunteer Reception

was overnight supervision of Volunteer Reception volunteers, volunteer recruitment and some IT expertise. The rest of the team made quick reservations and most flew out yesterday.

**Monday, 10/29 and Tuesday, 10/30** – The days are flying by – there are three of us left on the ground here. I've

been doing the training for volunteers every four hours – the call volume has really decreased, is now down to about 2700 calls a day. Reverse 911 is being used and we find that it needs to be explained during our volunteer training. I was told that one 2-1-1 caller said that she had tried Reverse 911, by dialing 119, but it didn't work. So, she called 2-1-1. Ah...a teachable moment. Today (Tuesday) volunteers completed entering the 100,000+ calls on the new software platform that were done on paper. Through all of this the 2-1-1 San Diego staff has handled this with grace – all of these people coming into their workplace and having to do things in such different ways. They have also extended this grace to others. Wednesday night we'll start sending calls from 11:00 p.m. – 5:00 a.m. to San Bernardino 2-1-1.

**Wednesday, 10/31/07** – Today was about recovery – helping 2-1-1 San Diego recover from the disaster. Calls were no longer 1) can I go home and, 2) how do I get there? Calls were about how do I get back my home, my business and my life?

As for public awareness, this fire is the best thing that could have happened to this call center because they had a plan and rose to the occasion. They are now making the most of this opportunity to obtain the funds they need to get to the next level. Call volume continues to decrease and we have scaled back volunteers to five per shift.

**Thursday, 11/1/07** – Last day at 2-1-1 San Diego – Exit conference was held with 2-1-1 San Diego staff, where they answered the question of 'did they get from us what they needed' with a resounding 'yes.' In the time there, over 120,000 calls came in, 1,700-plus volunteers came through the doors providing over 7,000 hours of volunteer service.

# San Diego: another volunteer's perspective

By Joy Duperault,  
*United Way of Florida*

I was ready to go home for the day. Checking my inbox for last minute messages, I saw one from Charlene Hipes at AIRS. "URGENT: THIS IS NOT AN EXERCISE: WE NEED YOU!" the subject line read. The AIRS/ UWA 2-1-1 Disaster Response Team was requesting deployment of members to San Diego to help with wildfires that had been raging for more than two days by that time.



Thinking about my schedule for the coming week, I sighed. "Do I really want to read this?" I thought. My boss stared at me and said, "Joy, you should go. You're on the national team for a reason." Geesch.

Not wanting to over-react, I told him I'd check with one of the team leaders in the morning to see what was up, hoping that they'd find all the volunteers they needed by then. After all, Florida's really far from California-- it would be so expensive...

On Wednesday morning, I called Larry's number. "We need 25 and only have 3," he said. "Can you come?" Afterwards I discovered that 22 DRT team members responded from all over the nation-- from Hawaii to Virginia, from Michigan to Florida. How great is that? I flew out early the next morning (flights for that same day wouldn't get me to San Diego before midnight Pacific coast time.) Arriving in

San Diego almost 12 hours after I started my day in Florida, I was asked to manage the night shift from 8 pm until 8 am each night. "Sure," I replied, feeling like the biggest sucker in the ocean, but knowing that this was probably the time frame wherein most of the locals really needed their sleep. Some of them had been working 'round the clock for three days. So, OK.

After a briefing, a meeting with the current managers and a quick tour of the facility that evening, I was blessed to plunge right in. The coordination between call center staff, local government employees and resources, and hundreds of local volunteers was like a feast to my soul-- to see everyone "playing so well in the sandbox" was truly a joy.

As each new hurdle presented itself, people worked together to find the best solution. IT folks and center managers tried to maintain a common vision, and worked to change the single, cramped call room into two large rooms full of computers and phones in order to give web access to the latest disaster information (getting rid of the clumsy notebooks.) A special team was called in to rapidly develop a web database for logging calls, which was implemented only two days later. We even had a training room and all the air conditioning we needed (unlike my familiar hurricane disasters...)

Over the next five days the call volume gradually decreased, and we were able to integrate data entry into the schedule as new volunteers stepped up to the plate. San Diegoans rock when it comes to volunteering-- overall there were more than 1,600 volunteers during that first week!

Although I was tired by the time I went home six days later, I found that I was blessed to have been working nights-- the camaraderie and efficiency of the night specialists and data entry volunteers brought a new meaning to the word 'teamwork,' and I was grateful for the experience. I thank AIRS and United Way of America for spearheading and funding this marvelous assistance, and for the opportunity to witness the powerful service that 211 in disaster can be to its community.

P.S. If you're ever deployed, don't forget the Tylenol PM-- I was able to sleep six hours straight each day!



**Air conditioning**



# AIRS certifies new specialists

*Since the last newsletter, the following people have been awarded the Certified Information and Referral Specialist, Certified Information and Referral Specialist in Aging, or the Certified Resource Specialist designation in acknowledgement of their demonstrated competencies in the field of Information and Referral.*

## **CERTIFIED INFORMATION & REFERRAL SPECIALISTS**

Allender, Christine - Catholic Charities, Chicago IL

Argenio, Adriane - United Way of CT/2-1-1, Rocky Hill CT

Arredondo, Irene - 2-1-1 Texas South Plains, Lubbock TX

Baumunk, Kirk - Huron Valley Ambulance, Ann Arbor MI

Bentley, Jaquanda - United Way of CT / 211, Hartford CT

Bequette, Mary Jo - Southeastern MN Center for Independent Living (SEMCIL) Disability Linkage Line, Rochester MN

Carter, Teresa - Richland County Information Line, Mansfield OH

Coates, Dorothy - Seven Counties Services Inc., Louisville KY

Colagiovanni, Michele - United Way of CT / 211, Newington CT

Collins, Jameela - United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta, Atlanta GA

Davies, Tara - United Way of CT / 211, Rocky Hill CT

Dickson, Erica - Fulton County Senior I&A, Atlanta GA

Garison, Kathy - United Way of Abilene 2-1-1 Texas A Call for Help, Abilene TX

Gregory, Erin - Heartline 211, Oklahoma City OK

Guzowski, Ginger - United Way of CT / 211, Meridian CT

Hendricks, Chris - Allen Community Outreach, Allen TX

Henry, Shauna - United Way of CT/2-1-1, East Hartford CT

Jackson, Zelma - Aiken County Helpline Inc., Aiken SC

Jarmusyte, Indre - United Way of CT / 211, Kensington CT

Jeffrey, Scott - Huron Valley Ambulance, Ann Arbor MI

Johnson, Sara - C.A.L.L. 211, Muskegon Heights MI

Jordan, Cheryl - United Way, Arlington TX

Joyner, Katherine - Seven Counties Services Inc., Louisville KY

Kenyon, Carey - United Way of Jackson County, Jackson MI

King, Tanisha - Volunteer Center of Battle Creek, Battle Creek MI

Lynch, Nicholas - United Way of Jackson County, Jackson MI

Miller, Misty - United Way of Greater Houston, Houston TX

Miori, Jenn - 2-1-1 Texas, UWCA, Austin TX

Peltier-Joseph, Leslee - Fulton County Office on Aging, Atlanta GA

Powell, Belinda - Seven Counties Services Inc., Louisville KY

Reitzel, Jeanette - Washburn Co. Unit on Aging, Spooner WI

Reynolds, Tanya - Aiken Co. Help Line, Aiken SC

Robinson, Corrine - United Way of CT/2-1-1, Rocky Hill CT

Robinson, Geneva - Seven Counties Services Inc., Louisville KY

Smith, Tamara - United Way of CT/2-1-1, Rocky Hill CT

Smith, Vinola - Heartline, Oklahoma City OK

Spadafora Manzella, Fran - Human Svcs. Coalition of Tompkins County, Inc., Ithaca NY

Sparkman, Terry - Fulton County Office on Aging, Atlanta GA

Starling-Ahmed, Marlese - United Way of CT / 211, Hartford CT

Storm, Janie - Heartline, Oklahoma City OK

Willett, Monique - Neighborhood Service Organization, Detroit MI

Williams, Callie - Fulton County Office on Aging, Atlanta GA

Wnuk, Tammy - Central Referral/211 WNY, Buffalo NY

*Continued on page 13*

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**CERTIFIED INFORMATION & REFERRAL SPECIALISTS-  
Aging**

Aman, Pamela - Area Agency on Aging of Western MI, Grand Rapids MI  
Andrews, Stormie - Southern Alabama Regional Council On Aging, Dothan AL  
Berube, Virginia - Senior Services of Island County, Camano Island WA  
Blanchard, Wayne - NH Elderly & Adult Services ServiceLink Merimack Co, Concord NH  
Brand, Delia - Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission AAoA, Camden AL  
Bretzel, Jamie - ADRC, Marshfield WI  
Brigman, Pati - Senior Services of Island County, Oak Harbor WA  
Caner, Mubeccel - Franklin Co. Office on Aging, Columbus OH  
Chiu, Christina - Senior Services of Snohomish County, Mukilteo WA  
Dahl, Linda - NH Elderly & Adult Services Rockingham ServiceLink, Portsmouth NH  
Dent, Natalia - Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission AAoA, Uniontown AL  
Diaz, Gail - CHOICES, Bridgeport CT  
Dossett, Lisa - SARCOA, Dothan AL

Echols, Sharon - Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging, Calera AL  
Fishbein, Christina - CHOICES, Waterbury CT  
Fraser, Mary Ann - NH Elderly & Adult Services ServiceLink, Nashua NH  
Fuller, Lisa - Senior Services Inc, Kalamazoo MI  
Gamez, Antonia - Suburban Area Agency on Aging / Age Options, Oak Park IL  
Gilliland, Mary - Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging, Calera AL  
Hartwig, Barbara - Lincoln County Commission on Aging, Merrill WI  
Johnson, Tina - Southern Alabama Regional Council On Aging, Dothan AL  
Keeter, Janell - Northern Area Agency on Aging, Rhinelander WI  
Koski, Betty - CHOICES, Norwich CT  
Krodel, Nancy - CHOICES, Norwich CT  
Krukowski, Trista - Rusk County Senior Services, Ladysmith WI  
Kruse, Kimberly - Wood County Aging Resource Center, Wisconsin Rapids WI  
Maguire, Carolyn - NH Elderly & Adult Services ServiceLink Resource Center, Concord NH  
Manning, Sara - CHOICES, Waterbury CT

*Continued on page 14*

## **Earn CEU credit hours through AIRS training**

**AIRS Online Training Course Title    CEU Credit Hours    Credentialing Body**

<i>AIRS: An Overview for Resource Specialists</i>	1.5	AIRS
<i>AIRS: Disaster Preparation and Staff/Volunteer Management</i>	2	AIRS
<i>AIRS: Inclusions and Exclusions</i>	1	AIRS
<i>AIRS: Introduction to I &amp; R</i>	2	AIRS
<i>AIRS: Introduction to Taxonomy and Indexing</i>	3	AIRS
<i>AIRS: Serving People with Mental Health Issues</i>	2	AIRS, American Nurses Credentialing Center, California Board of Registered Nursing
<i>AIRS: The Information and Referral Process</i>	3	AIRS, American Nurses Credentialing Center, California Board of Registered Nursing, National Board of Certified Counselors
<i>AIRS: Working with Challenging Clients</i>	1	AIRS, American Nurses Credentialing Center, California Board of Registered Nursing

*Continued from page 13*

Martinez, Aida - 2-1-1 Texas South Plains, Lubbock TX  
O'Bryant, Mary - Lopez Island Senior Services, Lopez Island WA  
Oelfke, Anita - NH Elderly & Adult Services ServiceLink Resource Center, Concord NH  
Pabey Arroyo, Tania Lee - CHOICES, Waterbury CT  
Quillen, Lindsay - CHOICES, Hartford CT  
Rounds, Stephen - NH Elderly & Adult Services ServiceLink of Sullivan County, Claremont NH  
Scanlon, Ann - NWRC - NW Regional Council - AAA, Bellingham WA  
Scholten, Steven - North Shore Senior Center, Evanston IL  
Sharp, Tiffany - Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission, Dickinson AL  
Stein, Maribeth - Southwest Suburban Center on Aging, LaGrange IL  
Taylor, II, Melvin - NWRC - NW Regional Council - AAA, Bellingham WA  
Throwe, Jennifer - CHOICES, Hartford CT  
Trettheway, Linda - San Juan County Orcas Island Senior Center, Eastsound WA  
Van Hyning, Curt - San Juan Senior Services, Friday Harbor WA  
Ward, Felecia - Cobb Senior Services, Marietta GA  
Williams, Stephanie - Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission, Camden AL  
Wilson, Kristin - Area Agency on Aging 1-B, Southfield MI  
Yang, Jennifer - Senior Services of Snohomish County, Mukilteo WA

**CERTIFIED INFORMATION & REFERRAL SPECIALISTS-Canadian**

Aulakh, Sukhpal - Information Services Vancouver, Vancouver BC  
Burns, Sheryl - Information Services Vancouver, Vancouver BC  
Chan, Elisabeth - Information Services Vancouver, Vancouver BC  
Cheng, Rosana - Information Services Vancouver, Vancouver BC  
Chiu, Peter Tin Yan - The Cross-Cultural Community

Services Association, Toronto ON  
Chrysler, Monica - Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant CCAC, Hamilton ON  
Crehore, Trina - Findhelp Information Services, Toronto ON  
Hunter, Amy - Information Services Vancouver, Vancouver BC  
Morgan, Stephanie - Information Services Vancouver, Vancouver BC  
Ni, Michael Xiang - Findhelp Information Services, Toronto ON  
Nyerere, Leon - Contact Community Information, Volunteer Manitoba, Winnipeg MB  
Palmer, Alanna - Contact Community Information, Volunteer Manitoba, Winnipeg MB  
Quigley, Bobbi - Findhelp Information Services, Toronto ON  
Singh, Rachna - Information Services Vancouver, Vancouver BC

**CERTIFIED RESOURCE SPECIALISTS**

Blackburn, Kimberly - 2-1-1 Texas South Central Region, UWCA, Austin TX  
Brutvan, Michael - Human Svcs. Coalition of Tompkins County, Inc., Ithaca NY  
Hite, Timothy - Info Line, Inc., Akron OH  
Holstrom, Carrie - Seven Counties Services Inc., Louisville KY  
Kositzky, Melissa - UPCAP Services, Inc., Escanaba MI  
Lee, Alicia - 2-1-1 Texas A Call For Help, Abilene TX  
Mathew, Lini - 2-1-1 Hudson Valley Region, White Plains NY  
Osborn, Rachel - Volunteer Center of Battle Creek, Battle Creek MI  
Price, Amy - 2-1-1 United Way, Austin TX  
Sattler, Margaret - Area Agency on Aging Region IIIA, Nazareth MI

**CERTIFIED RESOURCE SPECIALISTS-Canadian**

Smith, Carol - Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, Regina SK

# Certification test dates

*Test sites must first be approved by a state/regional/provincial I&R association. AIRS must receive notification at least 90 days in advance. The CIRS, CRS and CIRS-A exams will be offered at each test site.*

*Applications to take an exam are due in the AIRS office 30 days prior to a test. (Applications are available for download).*

*Please be aware that registration for your local Affiliate Conference does not constitute registration for the AIRS Certification exam. If you are interested in testing, all certification exam applications, supporting documentation and appropriate exam fees must be mailed to the AIRS National Office in Fairfax, VA, and must arrive 30 days prior to the exam. DO NOT send your application for certification with your conference registration.*

*If an application and payment are mailed to an address other than the AIRS National Office in Fairfax, Virginia, the application will not be processed, and the applicant will be unable to sit for the exam. The contacts listed for each site can provide information such as directions to the test site, whether training or a study session will be available before the exam, and if there are additional charges from the hosting organization.*

*For additional questions, or to schedule a test, contact the AIRS Headquarters at (703) 218-AIRS (2477) ext 201 or [certification@airs.org](mailto:certification@airs.org).*

## **JAN. 4 - LEWISTON, ME**

9:30 - 11:30 am

8 Falcon Road

Rhonda Marie Clukey

(207)795-4010 x 140

[rclukey@seniorsplus.org](mailto:rclukey@seniorsplus.org)

approved to test and by contacting the following person)

Rosey Ilic (850)617-6302

[hotlinedir@211bigbend.org](mailto:hotlinedir@211bigbend.org)

Laura Mejia

(626)350-1841 ext. 2156

[lauram@211LA.org](mailto:lauram@211LA.org)

A \$25 administration fee made payable to CAIRS is due on the day of the exam. A receipt will be provided.

## **JAN. 14 - TOLEDO, OH**

10:00 am - Noon

United Way of Greater Toledo

One Stranahan Square, Ste. 160

Carol Klavinger

(419)254-4665

[carol.klavinger@unitedwaytoledo.org](mailto:carol.klavinger@unitedwaytoledo.org)

## **JAN. 23 - TUCSON, AZ**

9-11 am

3130 N. Dodge

Deb Harvey (520)323-1303

[deb@azinfo.org](mailto:deb@azinfo.org)

## **JAN. 25 - COLUMBUS, IN**

10 am - NOON

1531 13th Street, Suite M900

Lorealee Moore (812)372-6918

[lmoore@areaxi.org](mailto:lmoore@areaxi.org)

## **APRIL 17 - OMAHA, NE**

10:30 am - 12:30 pm

United Way of the Midlands

1805 Harney Avenue

Penny Weber (402)997-7001

[pweber@uwmidlands.org](mailto:pweber@uwmidlands.org)

## **JAN. 19 - TALLAHASSEE, FL**

10 am - NOON

PO Box 10950 (this is a confidential location, the street address will be provided when you are

## **FEB. 19 - SAN GABRIEL, CA**

9-11 am

211 LA County

526 W. Las Tunas Drive

## **APRIL 18 - OMAHA, NE**

1-3 pm

United Way of the Midlands

1805 Harney Avenue

Penny Weber (402)997-7001

[pweber@uwmidlands.org](mailto:pweber@uwmidlands.org)

# Renew your AIRS membership for '08

It's time to renew your AIRS membership for 2008! All prices of AIRS products and services remain the same for 2008:

- ◆ Membership (3 years in a row)
- ◆ Conference (6 years in a row)
- ◆ Accreditation (5 years in a row)
- ◆ Certification (2 years in a row).

Out of the four membership levels - Premium, Enhanced, Standard and Basic - we are finding that more than 40% of our members are joining at the Enhanced Level in order to obtain a free electronic

copy and, new this year, a free hard copy of The ABCs of I&R (value \$450). The 2008 revision to the ABCs will include a new chapter on call center operations.

Last year, more than 100 agencies moved up from Basic and Standard to the Enhanced level of membership. This year, why don't you join them? A stronger AIRS provides strength to all I&R organizations.

And remember that membership in AIRS includes membership in your independent state or regional AIRS affiliate (such as Florida AIRS or Wisconsin AIRS).

## AIRS gear still available

Purchase AIRS and I&R Merchandise for fun and awareness! Mix and match six designs and four products (some with extra color options). Reward and recognize your staff for certification, accreditation and for I&R in general! Click [here](#) to browse and buy.

AIRS Sweatshirt  
**\$25.99**

Warm up in our stylin' Hanes Heavyweight 90/10 cotton/polyester sweatshirt. Thick (but not bulky), for maximum comfort and durability.



AIRS Certified Resource Specialist (CRS) Mug  
**\$15.99**

Super-size your favorite beverage or just size-up to avoid spills with our hefty, 15 oz. ceramic Large Mug. Large easy-grip handle.



AIRS Accreditation Baseball Jersey  
**\$21.99**

100% cotton Baseball Jersey is a sporty hit with both men and women whether you're in the game or just looking the part in great run-around casual-wear. Choose red, blue or black sleeves.



### Standards of Cooperative Relationships Crossword Puzzle Answers

**Across**

- 5. MOU
- 7. SUSTAINED
- 8. CHILD CARE
- 9. CONTACT

10. AFTER-HOURS

**Down**

- 1. FULL SERVICE
- 2. SPECIALIZED

- 3. DUPLICATION
- 4. CLASSIFICATION
- 6. GAPS