

CAIRS

NEWSLETTER

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CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES

United Way HELPLINK Launches 2-1-1 San Francisco

By Ed Schoenberger

On March 29, 2-1-1 San Francisco was launched by HELPLINK: United Way of the Bay Area Community Information Center. 2-1-1 in San Francisco marks the introduction of 2-1-1 to the Northern California public.

The March 29 launch was celebrated with a community open house and press conference at the San Francisco headquarters of United Way of the Bay Area (UWBA), the founder and home of HELPLINK since its inception in the mid-1970's.

The press conference was attended by close to 100 of HELPLINK's agency partners and donors from the public, non-profit and private sectors. Speakers included representatives of the San Francisco Mayor's office describing both the day to day protocols and the disaster preparedness planning among 2-1-1, 9-1-1 and the 3-1-1 service soon to come to the City; the San Francisco Food Bank which uses the HELPLINK number to guide the public to the appropriate SF food service sites; and a Bay Area Katrina Survivor who came to meet and thank the HELPLINK staffer who helped her and her family get settled. Reporters from several daily newspapers and camera crews from ABC, FOX, NBC and Univision also attended, resulting in significant media coverage.

"It's about access," said Anne Wilson, President and CEO of the United Way of the Bay Area. "The variety, complexity and sheer volume of the system of services make 2-1-1 an absolute necessity. Too often, those beset by barriers of language, culture, circumstance – single mothers, the unemployed and hungry, refugees and immigrants – give up before they find the right service. 2-1-1 will be the way we can ensure they will get connected to help."

Following the press conference, United Way staff provided guided tours to guests, including visits to the 2-1-1 SF/HELPLINK call center and interactive exhibits of UWBA's current literacy, self-sufficiency, health and other program initiatives. In addition, United Way HELPLINK staff provided tutorials to non-profit agency representatives, showing them how to access HELPLINK's online database, and how to view and update their own agency records.

The 2-1-1 San Francisco launch is the first step in United Way's plans to help promote and establish 2-1-1 service throughout the Bay Area. United Way is working with Bay Area government, civic and non-profit leaders to expand 2-1-1 throughout the region: "Plans are underway to expand HELPLINK's cur-

CAIRS Calendar 2006

Apr. 20	AIRS Certification Testing, Riverside County
May 18	Board of Directors Meeting
May 19	Southern Regional Training Orange County
June 13	AIRS Certification Testing, Redlands
Sept. 28	Board of Directors Meeting
Sept. 29	Annual Conference, San Francisco Clarion Hotel

Visit www.cairs.org/conferences.htm for more information.

Dates and locations subject to change.

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Letter from the President . . .

Dear CAIRS Members:

Another milestone has been reached in our quest to bring 2-1-1 service to California. San Francisco now has 2-1-1 service from United Way of the Bay Area's HELPLINK.



Congratulations to HELPLINK and to the people of San Francisco. We hope more Bay Area counties will be able to join the 2-1-1 family before the end of the year.

In an effort to speed the roll-out of 2-1-1 as a statewide system we have been promoting the State 2-1-1 Business Plan among important allies and potential supporters. We hope to announce soon some important additional partners who will be joining CAIRS and United Ways of California in the 2-1-1 California Partnership. So watch for the 2-1-1

Update on email or on the CAIRS.org or 211California.org website.

The launch of the dual membership system with AIRS has occurred. We are watching to see what impact this has but so far it looks as though you are signing up in good numbers. If you have any questions or comments, don't hesitate to contact Nancy Findeisen at 916-447-7063 ext 328, or nfindeisen@communitycouncil.org. Nancy represents CAIRS on the AIRS Affiliate Council which is keeping a careful eye on how this new system works out. And if you have not yet renewed your membership you can download a membership application from the AIRS website, www.airs.org.

We still need your vigilance in contacting your federal representatives in support of the Calling for 2-1-1 Act – H.R.896. It is important to get the Bill moving through committee. See the last CAIRS Newsletter for fuller information on this vital piece of legislation. The Senate companion bill is S.211.

25 people attended the Northern California Regional CAIRS training day in Sacramento on March 17. The evaluations from all the sessions were extremely positive. Thanks to the Conference Committee for pulling this off so well, and to Nancy F., Nancy B. and the whole crew at INFO LINE and the Community Services Planning Council in Sacramento for all their hard work.

We hope to see a great turnout for the Southern Regional Training in Orange County on May 19. Please note there will not be a Certification Test at that time, but another site has been arranged in Southern California – Redlands, on June 13.

– Sara Matta

Cell phone Access for 2-1-1

Cell phone companies are gradually recognizing the importance of providing 2-1-1 access for their customers. T-Mobile was the first to program access back in September 2005 in the Southern California Area. Cingular has followed and has completed most of the six county area. We recently received assurance from Sprint/Nextel that they will also make 2-1-1 dialing work for their customers. This just leaves Verizon Wireless among the larger wireless carriers, and discussions are under way with them. So far these wireless companies have done the work at no cost to the 2-1-1 providers.

Reach a Statewide Audience with CAIRS

Have a conference, service or product you want to promote statewide? Consider purchasing ads in the CAIRS Newsletter. The current circulation is over 200, with membership in CAIRS continuing to grow. We are offering very low introductory advertising rates:

For-Profit rate = \$400 for 4 quarter page ads (\$100 per ad)

Non-Profit rate = \$200 for 4 quarter page ads (\$50 per ad)

If you are interested contact Barbara Bernstein at (510) 537-2710, ext. 8; or by email: bbernstein@edenir.org

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The CAIRS Newsletter is published quarterly by the California Alliance of Information and Referral Services.

The CAIRS newsletter is provided as a benefit to all CAIRS members. Please contact CAIRS if you wish to reprint any part of this newsletter.

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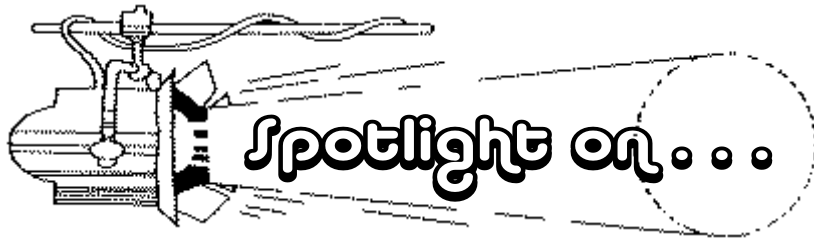
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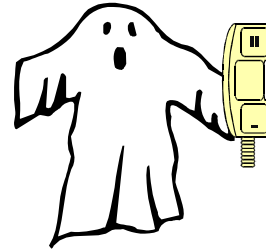
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California Alliance of Information
and Referral Services



Phantom Calls Haunt 2-1-1 Centers



Everyday, Community Resource Advisors in 2-1-1 Call Centers across the country answer ringing telephone lines but instead of a person in crisis on the line they hear clicks, beeps, static, busy signals, ringing, or even dead air. Because there is no live person on the other end of the line, these calls are often referred to as “Phantom Calls”. However, there is nothing mysterious about the reasons for, or costs associated with, these “calls.”

According to Marianne Galleon, 211 LA County Technical Director and AIRS Technical Chair, “A Phantom Call occurs when there is noise or static in a telephone wire that is misinterpreted by public telephone switching equipment as a person in crisis dialing 2-1-1.” Wind, rain, snow, hail, a dangling cable, or even birds landing on a telephone wire can all cause a Phantom Call.

During the initial 2-1-1 testing phase, 211 LA County estimates that they received as many as 5,000 Phantom Calls a month. “Phantom Calls can be as brief as two rings, or they might last up to an hour or more,” said Galleon. “That contributes greatly to ACD (Automatic Call Distribution) and telephone line overload.” On an annual basis, this problem can cost a 211 Call Center thousands of dollars. Fortunately, there are at least two ways to correct this problem.

One way to correct the problem is for the telephone service provider to implement a “call delay” type mechanism. This mechanism will affect how the public telephone switching equipment reads the call. “If the provider receives the pulse for a 2-1-1 call,” said Galleon, “the mechanism will make the call wait four seconds before putting it through to a call center. If any other pulses are emitted during that time, the system will drop the call.”

A second way to correct the problem is to implement an IVR (Interactive Voice Response) system at the start of a 2-1-1 call. The IVR asks callers to choose between hearing instructions in English or Spanish by pressing the number one or two on their telephone keypad. According to Galleon, “An IVR system is the only true way to eliminate Phantom Calls because the system will only allow calls to ring through that have been confirmed by a live person.”

Thankfully, although there is no mystery as to the reason for, or costs associated with Phantom Calls, there is also no mystery as to how the problem can be solved.

– David Serby, 211 LA County

SF Launch (from Page 1)

rent infrastructure to offer 2-1-1 services in Marin, Napa, San Mateo, and Solano Counties,” said **Ed Schoenberger**, Executive Director of HELPLINK. “Our application for 2-1-1 Marin has already been approved by the Marin 2-1-1 committee and submitted to the PUC.”

Until 2-1-1 service expands into those counties, United Way HELPLINK will continue to serve them through its toll-free number, 800-273-6222, (or 415-808-HELP via cell phone) which receives about 40,000 calls annually from across the region. At the open house, **Anne Wilson** acknowledged the work of soon to launch 2-1-1 Centers in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, Eden I&R (Information and Referral), and Contra Costa Crisis Center describing their “vital role in their communities.” Wilson introduced “our partners in the East Bay,” **Barbara Bernstein** and **John Bateson**, Executive Directors of those agencies and CAIRS Board members, to the crowd.

2-1-1 San Francisco will be operated during normal business hours by HELPLINK - the United Way Community Information Center, which has provided the Bay Area with I&R service for more than thirty years through their call center, print directories, and online searchable database of services. During evenings, weekends, and holidays, calls will be answered by United Way partner San Francisco Suicide Prevention (SFSP). United Way anticipates serving as much as 10 percent of the city's population through 2-1-1 San Francisco during its first year – some 70,000 people – based on the experiences of other first-year 2-1-1 call centers around the country.

Maritza Villagomez, HELPLINK's Call Center Manager and a HELPLINK staffer for 17 years, stressed that UWBA HELPLINK would “now be able to increase the number of people helped by our Immigrant Assistance, Homelessness Prevention/ Basic Needs and Earn It Keep It Save It programs.”

United Way Demonstrates Support for 2-1-1 Plan

United Way organizations in California took three important steps forward in support of the California Alliance of Information and Referral Services in recent weeks, including important support of our state's developing 2-1-1 business plan.

On Feb. 17, 28 United Way of California organizations convened in Burbank for a statewide meeting that included a 2-1-1 update presentation by **Elizabeth Sadlon**, the Glendale-based consultant who has been working with CAIRS and United Way in the development of a statewide 2-1-1 business plan.

Sadlon reviewed historical information regarding a Memorandum of Understanding between CAIRS and United Way and noted that a 2-1-1-leadership team consisting of representatives from both CAIRS and United Way have been responsible for the development of the state 2-1-1 plan. CAIRS representatives on the leadership team include **Sara Matta**, 2-1-1 San Diego, **Maribel Marin**, 2-1-1 Los Angeles and **Nancy Findeisen**, Community Services Planning Council of Sacramento; United Way representatives include myself, Mark Walker of United Way of the Silicon Valley and Linda Avedon of United Way of Stanislaus County.

Sadlon underlined the importance of collaboration if the state 2-1-1 plan is to become a reality. The partnership between CAIRS and United Way is critical for the plan to be successful, she noted. In response, United Ways of California demonstrated their support of the plan by voting to support a motion by **Anne Wilson**, Chief Executive Officer of the United Way of the Bay Area, to accept the state plan as presented.

United Way's second show of support also took place during the Feb. 17 meeting, when following a discussion focused on

funding requirements for 2-1-1, United Way voted unanimously to endorse a financial plan that would encourage individual United Way organizations to support the 2-1-1 business plan according to a funding formula that is expected to be finalized by the CAIRS/United Way leadership team in the near future.

United Way's third show of support was demonstrated in early March through a letter from **Mark Walker**, president & CEO of United Way of the Silicon Valley and president of United Ways of California, who encouraged United Way organizations that are not currently members of CAIRS to formally join CAIRS.

Walker noted in his letter that of the 28 dues-paying members of the state United Way association, 10 United Ways are currently members of CAIRS. "I hope you will consider this request for your United Way to join your United Way colleagues and CAIRS in the pursuit of a successful statewide 2-1-1 plan," said Walker.

Within a week of Walker's letter, two additional United Way organizations had indicated their intention to join CAIRS, with more expected to follow suit in the near future.

In his letter to his United Way colleagues, Walker noted the importance of the United Way/CAIRS relationship:

"Support of the statewide plan is just one component of the equation needed to help us achieve our goal of 2-1-1 service for every resident of California. Another important component is United Way support of CAIRS through a strong level of United Way membership in CAIRS."

David M. Smith

Participate in the New CAIRS Listserv

WHO: Current CAIRS/AIRS members

WHAT: Listservs allow a group of people to share communications by e-mail. The new listserv for CAIRS will provide an ongoing opportunity for members to exchange ideas, ask questions, discuss solutions, promote communication, analyze issues, and give input to the CAIRS Board. The CAIRS Board may use the listserv to conduct surveys, post timely information and updates, and participate in discussions with the membership.

WHERE: CAIRS@atnet.org is the address. Please wait for notification from CAIRS before you try to access the listserv.

HOW: All current CAIRS/AIRS members will be added to the listserv. You will receive an introductory e-mail message that will include an **unsubscribe** link if you do not want to participate as well as a **subscribe** link if you would like to add additional agency staff to the listserv.

WHEN: Beginning in January 2006. Listserv members will be added as CAIRS/AIRS membership renewals are received.

CONTACT: Tara Sullivan-Hames, CAIRS Membership Vice President, tsullivanhames@ncen.org – 530-879-2455 voice or 530-895-4010 fax

InfoLine Sacramento Goes to Court

An Information and Referral (I&R) Specialist is on duty every weekday at InfoLine Sacramento's satellite office at the William R. Ridgeway Family Relations Courthouse. Located within the court's Self-Help Center, I&R Specialists help court visitors connect and individuals referred by judges find services and court-approved counseling and classes.

The collaboration between Sacramento Superior Courts and InfoLine Sacramento began over seven years ago as plans for the new courthouse were being developed. Nancy Findeisen, Chief Executive Officer of the Community Services Planning Council, InfoLine's parent organization, serves on the Superior Court Community-Focused Planning Committee. When plans for building were shared with the committee, she suggested that the proposed "help-desk" concept be expanded to include more comprehensive assistance through InfoLine services. Court officials were so supportive that they included separate office space for an InfoLine-staffed Resource Center in the new courthouse.

The InfoLine Resource Center is a comfortable room furnished with a desk, computer and printer for I&R staff and a sitting area with tables and chairs which visitors use when browsing through the vast array of community resources literature.

There is also a library of court-related videos, which can be played on a television located in the center.

More than 2,600 people visit the office annually. I&R staff assess their needs and refer them to appropriate services in InfoLine's database of over 2,400 programs and services. InfoLine staff also assist individuals referred by judges to find appropriate court-approved services, such as counseling, and parenting or anger management classes.

In addition to those who walk in the office, InfoLine staff visit various sitting areas within the court where individuals and extended families are waiting for their court appointment. Staff reach more than 14,000 individuals each year through this outreach effort, sharing information about resources, services, and letting them know how to contact InfoLine for additional assistance.

People helped through InfoLine's Resource Center include single parents, extended family members, grandparents raising grandchildren among others. Most need assistance with legal matters, but other significant needs include housing, counseling, and employment and training.

– Nancy Findeisen

STATEMENT OF CAIRS FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES For the year ending December 31, 2005

Income		Total Unrestricted Fund Expense	\$31,932.44
Membership	\$ 4,600.00	2-1-1 Legislative Assistant*	\$ 2,032.31
Interest	\$ 688.91	Total Restricted Fund Expense	\$ 2,032.31
Sales	\$ 105.00	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$33,964.75
Conferences	\$18,575.00		
Other	\$ 915.00	Carryover from 2004	\$41,450.85
Total Unrestricted Fund Income	\$24,883.91		
2-1-1 Legislative Assistant*	\$ 4,326.00	CAIRS Unrestricted Fund Balance	\$35,524.43
Total Restricted Fund Income	\$ 4,326.00	CAIRS Restricted Funds*	\$ 1,171.58
TOTAL INCOME	\$29,209.91		
Expenditures		Total Funds as of 12/31/05	\$36,696.01
Board Expenditures	\$ 8,727.04		
Conferences	\$ 8,536.33		
Insurance	\$ 2,996.00		
AIRS/CAIRS Liaison	\$ 1,186.25		
Public Relations	\$ 1,459.93		
Newsletter	\$ 2,019.29		
Bank Charges	\$ 120.00		
Taxes	\$ 19.00		
Miscellaneous	\$ 425.00		
Consulting Services	\$ 6,443.60		

*Restricted Funds. These funds were donated to CAIRS for specific uses and may not be used for the general activities of CAIRS.



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Are you in need of an inexpensive way to let people know about your services, an event or a product? Consider placing an ad in the CAIRS newsletter. Sliding scale fees are available. Want more information? Call Barbara Bernstein, CAIRS PR Committee Chair, at 510-537-2710, ext. 8.

Letters to the Editor

As always, the Board of Directors is looking for your input. You can provide feedback and comments by contacting the Editor, Barbara Bernstein [see above for contact information].



CAIRS

Vision Statement

A strong network of organizations that ensures everyone can easily Access high quality information and referral for health and human services.

Mission Statement

To enhance the effectiveness of Information and Referral services through leadership, education and support.

Goals

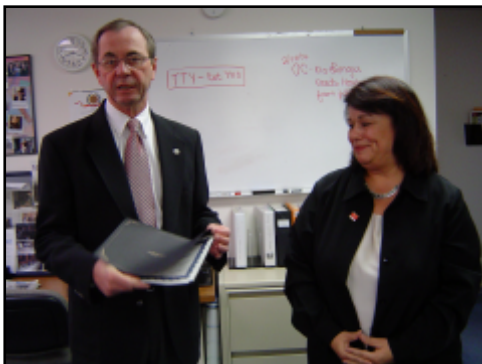
In order to achieve the Mission and Vision, the following Goals have been established:

To *provide* training and support to enhance professional skills;

To *facilitate* the exchange of information among the membership and others within the helping professions;

To *promote* awareness of Information and Referral services;

To *advocate* for the interests of the profession and the public it serves.



2-1-1 Ventura County celebrated the first anniversary of its 2-1-1 service on Feb. 11, 2006. Here David M. Smith, president and chief executive officer of United Way of Ventura County, receives a "thank you" certificate from Elaine Martinez-Curry, 2-1-1 program director in Ventura County, in recognition of the 2-1-1 partnership that exists between the two organizations.

211 Contra Costa County

2-1-1 began operating in test mode in Contra Costa County in February 2006. Test mode means that the service is activated but publicity is limited. This is because not enough money has been raised yet to support operating costs. As funding becomes available to hire and train additional information and referral specialists, 2-1-1 marketing in Contra Costa will increase.

AT&T programmed its 21 switching stations in Contra Costa County so that when anyone dials 2-1-1 from a local prefix, the phone rings at the Contra Costa Crisis Center where it's answered by trained staff. Cell phone providers haven't done this yet, so cell phone users in Contra Costa can access help by calling the backdoor number (800.830.5380) or going to the 211 Contra Costa website (www.211contracosta.org).

Most agencies that operate 2-1-1 start in test mode first. During test mode, a number of important things happen: 1) phone programming is checked; 2) staff are hired and trained; 3) the resource database is expanded; 4) internal controls are tested; and 5) protocols are developed with partner agencies to ensure successful handoffs of certain types of calls. Once funding exists to launch 2-1-1 publicly in Contra Costa, an estimated 50,000 to 100,000 people will call per year.

— John Bateson

Upcoming AIRS Certification Test Sites

APRIL 20, 2006 - RIVERSIDE, CA - 9:00 - 11:00 AM

Volunteer Center of Riverside County

2060 University Avenue, #212, Riverside, CA.

For information contact Tess Ayenew, 951/686-4402 x112, tayenew@vcrivco.org

An administrative fee of \$25.00 is due on exam day in the form of cash or a check, payable to CAIRS.

Please note - there will be no AIRS testing at the Southern California Regional Training in Orange on May 19.

JUNE 13, 2006 - REDLANDS, CA - 10:00 - Noon AND 1:00 - 3:00 PM

Redlands Community Center, 111 W. Lagonia Avenue, Redlands, CA

For information contact Angie Baur, 949/646-4357, abaur@infolinkoc.org

An administrative fee of \$25.00 is due on exam day in the form of cash or a check, payable to CAIRS.



2-1-1 San Diego staff at their Staff Appreciation Luncheon held Saturday February 11, 2006 at the Prado Restaurant in Balboa Park

CAIRS-AIRS Memberships Benefits

*Advocacy....Networking....Training....Service
Delivery....Communication....Participation*

CAIRS and AIRS have teamed together in 2006 and are offering a joint membership to pack more power into supporting and strengthening the I&R field. Your new dual membership in CAIRS and AIRS provides unique benefits at each membership level. Choose a level and realize benefits from both the state and national organizations!

BASIC MEMBERSHIP - \$50

Voting Privilege AIRS and CAIRS (one vote for each organization per membership), AIRS & CAIRS Electronic Newsletters, CAIRS listserv, Member discount on CAIRS conferences, CA 2-1-1 planning information

STANDARD MEMBERSHIP

(\$250 for agencies < \$75,000; \$350 for agencies > \$75,000)

Voting Privilege AIRS (one vote) and CAIRS (two votes per membership), AIRS & CAIRS E-Newsletters, AIRS Journal, I&R Toolkit, 5% Discount on AIRS Products, CAIRS listserv, CA 2-1-1 planning information. 10% Additional Discount on CAIRS conferences (up to 2 from same agency per conference)

ENHANCED MEMBERSHIP - \$500

Voting Privilege AIRS (one vote) and CAIRS (two votes per membership)

Same benefits as Standard Membership PLUS ABCs of I&R (current non-member price is \$450), 10% Discount on AIRS Products, 10% Additional Discount on CAIRS conferences (up to 5 from same agency)

PREMIUM MEMBERSHIP - \$750

Voting Privilege AIRS (one vote) and CAIRS (two votes per membership)

Same benefits as Enhanced Membership PLUS 15% Discount on AIRS Products and 10% Additional Discount on CAIRS conferences (unlimited from same agency)

To join, download a membership application from the AIRS web site, www.airs.org. The website also contains a tool that will help you calculate the best membership level for your organization. If you have questions about membership, contact Nancy Findeisen at 916-447-7063 ext 328, or nfindeisen@communitycouncil.org.

Note: As of April, 2006, newsletters will only be available in electronic format.



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