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United Way of Lake County

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211 Lake County Celebrates First Five Years of Impact *Lake County's 24/7 Helpline Surpasses 350,000 Connections*



United Way of Lake County

LAKE COUNTY, IL. (October 30, 2024) – United Way of Lake County, in partnership with Lake County Government and local health and human service providers, celebrates the fifth anniversary of 211 services for Lake County and the more than 350,000 connections made since its launch.

The free, confidential, 24-hour information and referral service is a lifeline in times of crisis and every day, connecting anyone in need to available local resources. 211 offers immediate guidance and support, ensuring community members are never alone in their hour of need. 211 has grown to become Lake County's one-stop shop for guiding people to a wide range of resources, including mental health and health care services, employment support, housing and shelter, food, utility assistance, and more.

On October 24, nearly 200 community leaders and other stakeholders representing government, business and nonprofits filled Audubon Hall at the Independence Grove Visitors Center in Libertyville for a 2-hour program to discuss 211's measurable impact and results and hear testimonials from callers. The event was emceed and moderated by CBS News Chicago

anchor, Dana Kozlov, and featured a panel of local government and human services experts discussing how 211 has made finding help easier and transformed the way people get connected to essential health and human services. The panel included Kathleen O'Connor, Supervisor of Libertyville Township; Jesus Ruiz, Dean of College of Lake County's Lakeshore Campus; Tim Sashko, President of the Lake County Board of Health; Allen Swilley, Executive Director of PADS Lake County; and Kelly Brown, Community Information Officer at Interface Children & Family Services who manages the 211 Contact Center.

In its fifth year of service, 211 made a combined total of more than 90,000 connections, including 8,903 calls and two-way texts to the 211 Contact Center and 82,061 visits to the 211LakeCounty.org website. The top five needs requested from 211 were housing and shelter, utilities, food, employment and income, and healthcare. Housing and shelter remains the top category of need since 211's launch, with rent payment assistance ranking as the top housing need. 211 reporting shows that calls and texts have been received from every zip code in Lake County, with the top ten communities contacting 211 being Waukegan, Zion, Round Lake area, North Chicago, Gurnee, Grayslake, Mundelein, Vernon Hills, Lake Villa and Antioch.

State Senator Adriane Johnson highlighted 211's impact citing "the incredible leadership Lake County has devoted to improving lives in our state." During the event, she presented a certificate from the Illinois Senate recognizing 211 Lake County's anniversary and continued commitment to serving the community.

"It's been very rewarding to see the value 211 has brought to Lake County these first five years," says Kristi Long, President and CEO, United Way of Lake County. "We're thrilled to have helped lead the way to bring 211 to all Illinois communities and serve as a model for the rest of the state."

To access 211, simply call 2-1-1 or text your zip code to 898-211. Resource navigators at the 211 Contact Center, who are experienced, trained specialists, will guide people to the help they deserve in their moments of need. The comprehensive 211 service is multilingual with English and Spanish speaking staff, as well as interpretations to more than 150 languages.

To learn more about United Way of Lake County's 211, visit 211LakeCounty.org.

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