

# HotNews

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(A note from the President – continued)

was done by existing staff and dedicated board members volunteering their time. In November 2007, the little agency formerly known as Hotline became 211 SLO Hotline and joined the network of call centers serving 85% of the state and 75% of the nation.

The technology platform for 211 centers is uniform. They all use the same search criteria and have an on-line database. In a disaster, calls can be forwarded out of harms way or another center can assist with overflow. Additionally, our comprehensive listing of programs and services can now be accessed through our website and updated easily as information changes. Telephony was upgraded and expanded and voice over internet protocol (VOIP) was added. Redundancy is built-in and emergency back-up available. Soon, reports will be programmed to track unmet needs and referrals by agency.

211 is working well and no longer a project. It's now part of our business and here today because of the commitment and generosity of many people who have worked, guided or supported the effort. A special thanks to the officers of the board who agreed to remain in place as a team for a second term to maintain business continuity during a dynamic time.

We brought 3-digit dialing to Hotline, but it wouldn't work without the caring Hotliners that answer the phone each and every time it rings. It's to you that our Community owes its greatest thanks.

Happy holidays to all of you and much success in the coming year!

Tim Williams



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## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS UPDATE

211 recently convened a Disaster Committee of Board and Staff members to prepare an Emergency Operations Plan for 211 SLO Hotline. This plan will detail how we function within the framework of SLO County to help residents in the event of a major disaster, such as Wildfire, Earthquake, Diablo Canyon incident, etc. A similar plan was devised by the San Diego 211 group, which has already responded to two major wildfire disasters, including the massive fires in 2007. That county saw the value of having 211 service, as the hotline handled calls for information about evacuations, shelters, available assistance, and more, while keeping the 911 lines free for life-threatening emergencies.

San Diego's EOP included specific procedures to expand the pool of call takers to handle a huge increase in call volume and to work in tandem with their County's Office of Emergency Services. 211 SLO Hotline's EOP will similarly address the specific ways in which we can serve our community through partnerships with County agencies.

Our Technology Committee has been working on equipment needed now and in the future to position us to best help the community in the event of an emergency. We are also in the process of updating our in-house emergency policies to include very specific procedures to be used by staff for many scenarios, from a simple power outage to a major disaster requiring evacuation.

## YEAR IN REVIEW PROGRAM MANAGER'S REPORT

We are one year into being a 211 service, enhancing the same assistance we have provided since 1970, with an easier number for the public to reach us.

We have trained several new bilingual staff members who have gone on to help Spanish speaking and other callers, and do outreach to the Spanish speaking community. They have updated and distributed our Spanish language brochures, spoken at community events, and networked with other human service providers.

Basic Hotliner training has been given to 28 community volunteers.

The Telecare Phone Friends program has been revived, providing daily reassurance calls to homebound and disabled seniors. Literature for the program has been updated and distributed.

This summer, Family Care Network and Child Welfare Services initiated use of our hotline as the after hours contact for urgent calls. Our volunteers and staff provide follow-up, contacting the on-call social workers for those programs.

In October, we helped sponsor the 4th annual San Luis Obispo Suicide Prevention Forum, open to the public and free of charge. It was attended by over 100 community members, who were given comprehensive training about how to assist suicidal individuals.

Mike Bossenberry  
Program Manager



Tim Williams  
211 SLO Hotline  
Board President

## A note from the President

*Tim Williams, founder and CEO of Digital West Networks joined the Hotline board in 2005 and has served as board president since July, 2007.*

I was fortunate to come to Hotline during the planning stage of 211 implementation and was able to assist with the operational and technological changes that have expanded access to social services for the people of SLO County.

The concept of three digit dialing for access to all health and human services was federally approved in 2000 and by 2005; most major counties in California had plans for the service. Hotline had provided information and referral, support and crisis intervention service to SLO County for 38 years and seemed a logical choice to add the technology and procedural upgrades to meet 211 standards. Our non-profit partners, City and County officials and key members of the community agreed, endorsed our application to the California Public Utilities Commission, and approval was granted in 2006.

A 211 Steering Committee was formed and County Supervisor Jerry Lenthall co-chaired with me to provide guidance, oversight and all forms of assistance needed. With a focused effort by the steering committee and the Hotline board, start-up funds were raised from the County, Cities, the business community and generous individuals. All conversion work

(Continued on back page)



GET CONNECTED. GET ANSWERS. GET HELP.

## A Year of Accomplishment

The provision of 211 service in late 2007 began long before a team of people came together to manage the implementation of the service over the last two years. It started in 1970 when a small group of volunteers cared enough about this community to establish Hotline and was built from there through the collective effort of many dedicated employees and compassionate volunteers over the last 38 years.

Over 10 years as a volunteer here at Hotline, the rewards were many. I sometimes felt I had made a difference and that was a privilege I treasured. As

Thank you!  
During the holiday season and all through the year, we have a lot to be thankful for...

Our volunteers, our supporters, and our donors.

Executive Director this last year, the honor of associating with amazing people doing wonderful work continues. I am very proud of the many accomplishments of this very fine team in just one year.



Linda McGregor  
Executive Director

"I sometimes felt I had made a difference and that was a privilege I treasured."

## Office Move

Right after the first of the year, we are moving to our new location in order to accommodate increased call volume. Your contribution, or donation of the following items, are needed for the new call center:

- Office furniture
- Computer equipment
- Bookshelves
- Work stations

Please contact Michelle at 540-3811 for more information.

And the Winner is ...



**The Hollywood Bowl**

Theme Selected  
by Kristen Jones

Bowl-a-Thon Coming Soon  
Spring 2009

Wii bowling will also be available. Be on the lookout for information. Start getting your teams together!

We asked our Board of Directors why they became involved with Hotline. Here's what they had to say ...



**Tim Williams, President**  
CEO, Digital West Networks

"211 is a service that truly helps people directly. Additionally, it supports all the non-profits, so it really is the best organization to be part of locally!"



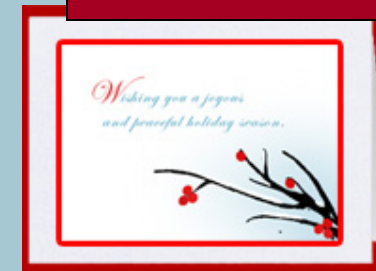
**Cindy Johnson, Vice President**  
Retired Business Owner

"Hotline was the first organization I was approached by when I moved to SLO in 2003. I've been happy to concentrate all my time on this non-profit as we've grown from our humble roots to a formal 211 center."

For gifts to your fortunate friends, consider a donation to their favorite local charity (or yours).

Your contribution to Hotline assists hundreds of local non-profits and keeps the lines open to thousands of callers each year and we will even send the greeting card for you.

*What to get for someone special?  
The Giving Gift*



For details and to donate see our website at [www.slohotline.org](http://www.slohotline.org) or call 540-3803

**Suzanne Atkinson**  
Manager, Glenn, Burdette, Phillips & Bryson  
"Hotline is a vitally important, under appreciated community resource and I would like to see it get the exposure it needs to grow and reach those who can use its services."



**Kristi Balzer, Secretary**  
Government Relations Manager, Charter Communications  
"The service 211 provides to the community is invaluable and it is rewarding to be part of such a significant organization."



**Mitsi Davis, Treasurer**  
Operations Administrator, Coast National Bank  
"Hotline offers such a variety of amazing services to our community."



**Thom Dimmitt**  
Volunteer Representative  
"It is gratifying to function in a role where you are assisting people who are in desperate situations or have unmet needs."



**The People Behind 211 SLO Hotline**

*The staff is eagerly awaiting their new office space.*



(Back row, left to right)  
Mike Bossenberry, Program Manager; Michelle Robles, Marketing & Development Director; Darlene Barron, Bilingual Services; Clay Stiver, Cal Poly Intern.

(Front row, left to right)  
Amy Joseph, Resource Specialist; Jennifer Alexander, Administrative Coordinator; Linda McGregor, Executive Director; Sandra Acevedo, Bilingual Services/Supervisor.

(Due to confidentiality, our dedicated volunteers could not be included in the photo)

**Karen Fields**  
Vice President/Office Manager, Rabobank  
"I believe Hotline plays a large role in our community and I want to be a part of giving back."



**Jamie Fuller**  
Director of Public Relations, S. Lombardi & Assc.  
"I enjoy giving back to the community by marketing an essential resource that not only provides information to callers, but saves lives."



**Bill Hooker**  
Retired Business Owner  
"I enjoy giving back to the community."



**Stew Jenkins**  
Attorney  
"I look forward to helping in any way I can and will assist with emergency plan coordination."



**Jeremy Koellish**  
Vice President, TekTegrity  
"As a successful entrepreneur, I like to give back to my community and Hotline is very much part of our community."



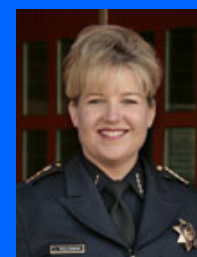
**Janice Petko**  
Director of Sales, Call America  
"211 is pretty exciting and it's great to see that Hotline has our county covered for this service."



**Jason Reed**  
Resource Coordinator, Women's Shelter Program  
"This experience has made me realize that the work that Hotliners do is not only invaluable, but, in many instances, can be life-saving as well."



**Lisa Soloman**  
Police Chief, City of Paso Robles  
"Hotline provides a powerful service to our community that assists many in need of non-emergency, but essential, services. I enjoy being a part of making this important service available that helps so many people every year."



**Highlights of 211's First Year**

- 2 additional after-hours clients added and 3 more added early 2009
- 24-hour bilingual services available since conversion
- Database Mgr, Admin Coordinator, Development Director, 4 FTE Spanish-speaking Call Assists added
- Database converted and on-line
- New telephone system and VOIP lines installed
- WebInform system training developed, tested and in progress
- Disaster plan developed (office only)
- Latino community outreach yielded 100% call increase
- Quality survey developed and trialed
- Education and Outreach plan developed and implemented
- 26 volunteers recruited and trained and volunteer recognition event held



**211 SLO HOTLINE  
The First Year**

Access to social services in our community has expanded at the time when it is needed the most.

**Call Increase Since 211**

Monthly Calls	Pre 211	Post 211
Nov	912	1,188
Dec	864	1,338
Jan	899	1,522
Feb	783	1,433
Mar	958	1,457
April	1,050	1,459
May	956	1,410
June	934	1,529
July	830	1,248
Aug	904	2,103
Sept	1,113	2,033
	10,203	16,720

**6,517 more calls  
63.9% increase**

In August and September, calls were up 105% over the previous year. Specific increases to date:

- Seniors 32%
- Health and medical 38%
- Food 77%
- Financial Assistance 68%
- Housing 36%
- Substance Abuse 25%