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**211 Niagara Celebrates Three-month Anniversary with more than 10,000 calls**

**February 2006:** Since its launch just three months ago, 211 Niagara has responded to more than 10,000 calls from Niagara residents looking for community, social, health and related government services. Response from users of the service has been overwhelmingly positive:

- An elderly woman said 211 helps her maintain her independence and reduces her frustration when looking for services.
- A young mother said she was glad she could call in the evening when the house was quiet to find out about childcare options.
- A caller was relieved that when dialing 211 he was able to speak with a live person who took the time to provide the information he needed.

Callers to 211 have been helped with the following inquiries and much more:

- Financial assistance
- Health services
- Services for seniors
- Family counseling
- Child care
- Housing
- Language classes
- Emergency shelters
- Job Searches
- Volunteer opportunities
- Social and recreational programs
- Legal assistance

Just dial 2-1-1 to reach a trained information and referral specialist. 211 is a free non-emergency telephone service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. No phone menus or buttons to push. 211 is confidential, non-judgmental and multilingual. Internet users can go online at [www.211niagara.ca](http://www.211niagara.ca)

Executive Director Rosanna Thoms states “call volume increased by 80 per cent the first month of operation with staff taking 1,000 more calls than the previous November.” Thoms said she “expects the call volume to increase as more people in the Niagara Region find out about 2-1-1”.

211 Niagara is a program of Information Niagara, an organization that has worked diligently with the four area United Ways, Niagara’s non-profit community, Ontario Trillium Foundation, and 211 Ontario to make 211 a reality for Niagara.

Presently more than five million Canadians have access to 211 service in Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton, Simcoe County and Niagara. United Way recently established the goal of all Canadians having 211 access by 2011.

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