

## United Way 211 goes above and beyond

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One afternoon not too long ago, a senior citizen called United Way 211 - Larimer County's connection to community services - about her Nighthawk carbon monoxide detector that had been going off since that morning.

She was nervous and not sure who she should call for help. She did not want to bother anyone if it was not serious, but there was really no way to know for sure unless a professional was able to inspect it.

Through a three-way call to the Loveland Police Department, they took her information and dispatched the local fire department.

In a follow-up call with her after the incident, she said a truck happened to be in her area and was there quickly.

They went in and checked her equipment, which they told her was outdated and not operating correctly. They left her a new one. She was very relieved and appreciative of the help.

Then a call came into 211 from a woman who said her niece was fleeing an abusive relationship and was due to arrive in Fort Collins with her two children, ages 3 and 6.

She wanted to know what services would be available to her niece and the children until her niece could get a job and get her family settled in our community.

The woman was thrilled that she was able to get the information immediately. She said as a middle-class grandmother type, she had no idea what it took to access resources until something happened in her own life.

She was thankful to be able to get all the information she needed to pass on to her niece in just one phone call.

What do these two calls have in common? In both instances, they reached a trained 211 information and referral specialist who was able to guide them to the appropriate resources in our community to meet their needs. These are just two examples of the thousands of calls United Way 211 receives each month.

We are incredibly fortunate to have a service like 2-1-1 available to help each and every member of our community with nonmedical or police emergencies. No matter your income, your age or the type of need that you have, 211 is available to you.

The next time you or someone you know has a need for community resources but you don't know where to start, remember 211 can help you get answers.

**Gordan Thibedeau is president and CEO of United Way of Larimer County. Reach him at 407-7000. United Way of Larimer County is at [www.uwaylc.org](http://www.uwaylc.org).**