

Share the Powerful Message of 211

February 11th (2-11) is National 211 Day in Canada. This year, 211 Day falls on a Sunday. Why not share your knowledge of this powerful Community Navigator with at least one friend or family member? If you are a service provider, tell a colleague how useful 211 is. If you know newcomers to Canada, connect them to 211 and its many resources available in their mother tongue.

More Red Deerians than ever are turning to 211 for answers to questions they have about Social, Government, Health and Community Services. 211 phone service has been available in Red Deer since 2015 with live people answering calls 24 hours a day 7 days a week. The City of Red Deer pays for the phone portion of the service, and United Way Central Alberta looks after the cost of maintaining an up-to-date database. If you are outside of Red Deer, service can be accessed at ab.211.ca online, and online chat.

Recently in Red Deer, **an RCMP officer called 211** after he was approached by a home care nurse. The nurse was worried about a client's family living situation after her client moved to hospital. She was concerned about two family members left behind in the cluttered, unkempt home that would likely not pass health and safety standards. Information and Referral Specialists were able to connect him with Alberta Health Services Health and Safety Inspections, and recommended that the officer contact the Social Service Response Team to report concern about the safety of a child living in the home.

A man struggling with mental health, addiction and homelessness called 211 for help in finding a lodge to stay at in Red Deer. He said that he was currently staying at the Red Deer hospital. The Information and Referral Specialist explored his situation. His doctor had signed papers for him to go to a specific personal care lodge, but the caller felt uncomfortable going to the lodge. The I&R Specialist assessed whether or not the caller had a social worker and the caller reported he felt that his social worker was not meeting his needs. With this information, The Information and Referral Specialist provided the caller with information on the Housing First Program and invited him to call back if he needed additional resources.

A new Canadian called asking for help getting food, clothing and furniture. She lives in Red Deer and needed resources to be as close to her as possible. She was referred to the Red Deer Food Bank Society, John Howard Society of Red Deer, and Habitat for Humanity Red Deer Region Society.

These three people were able to find the help they need because someone told them about 211.

On National 211 Day, do your part to make sure even more people know they have this powerful resource at their fingertips. Talk to them personally, or post a message online using the hashtags #211Day, #HelpStartsHere, #Dial211 and #MakeTheRightCall

The miracle is this, the more we share, the more we have. – Leonard Nimoy