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2-1-1 BROWARD'S SENIOR TOUCHLINE PROGRAM Helps local seniors cope with daily living and prepare for hurricane season

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FORT LAUDERDALE, FL – Currently there are over 250,000 seniors (age 65 and over) in Broward County with approximately 87,000 of them living alone and struggling to remain independent and cope on their own. For those needing a little extra attention and an additional sense of security, 2-1-1 Broward offers Senior Touchline, a free service that provides a daily telephone call for people over 60 years of age who live alone and need someone to check on them. The Senior Touchline program helps ensure that older adults can maintain a sense of well-being while remaining in their homes. The daily Touchline calls, which are made by rigorously trained counselors and volunteers, provide social contact and emotional support and can prevent older adults from requiring more costly services or institutional placement. 2-1-1 Broward is a non-profit organization that provides 24 hour comprehensive helpline and support services to individuals and families in our community seeking crisis intervention assistance and/or information and connections to health and human services in Broward County.

2-1-1 Broward's Senior Touchline calls are designed to engage individual seniors in conversation, to find out how they are doing and simply to have someone start their day with a friendly conversation. Each day, within a pre-determined time period, a 2-1-1 Broward counselor calls registered seniors to make sure they are safe and well. Calls are made between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m., and are divided in half-hour call periods. So for example, if a senior chooses to be called at 7:00 a.m., they will receive the call between 7:00 a.m. and 7:30 a.m. The program is designed to guarantee that the counselor or volunteer makes contact with the individual during the course of the morning. If the 2-1-1 Broward counselor is unsuccessful in reaching the senior after one hour of repeated attempts, the designated emergency contacts will be called and asked to check on the senior's well-being. If the senior cannot be reached, 2-1-1 Broward will contact the local police department to perform a senior wellness check to confirm their safety. In some cases, 2-1-1 Broward will call to dispatch emergency services. 2-1-1 Broward counselors and volunteers can also provide information about the different services and agencies serving the senior community.

Additionally, with Hurricane Season upon us, now is an important time for seniors to register with the Senior Touchline Program. Each year before hurricane season, a 2-1-1 Broward Touchline counselor will work with the participants to develop a plan of action in the likelihood of a storm. The counselors review all options for evacuation and provide seniors with information and referrals about programs that can assist them with any special needs. After the storm, the daily reassurance calls resume to make sure all of the seniors are safe.

A completed application is all that is needed to register with 2-1-1 Broward's Senior Touchline program. To request an application or for more information about the Senior Touchline program, please contact Rafael Vazquez, Touchline Coordinator/Seniors Services Programs at (954) 390-0493, EXT. 247 or rvazquez@211-broward.org. Individuals can also call the Senior Helpline at (954) 390-0485 or visit www.211-broward.org.

The Jim Moran Foundation recently awarded a $55,786 grant to enhance the 2-1-1 Broward Senior Touchline program. This grant along with funding provided by the American Express Charitable Fund and the Vasquez Family Foundation will be used to increase outreach efforts that will promote the program, recruit, train, and manage additional volunteers.

About 2-1-1 Broward
The mission of 2-1-1 Broward is to provide 24 hour comprehensive helpline and support services to individuals and families in our community seeking crisis intervention assistance and/or information and connections to health and human services in Broward County. Every call to 2-1-1 is answered by a trained, degreed counselor who listens to the callers concerns, identifies their needs and links them to appropriate programs that help them on the road to recovery. 2-1-1 Broward relies on the generous support of government agencies, corporations, foundations and individuals to provide this vital community service. For more information regarding 2-1-1 and how you can help, please call 954-390-0493 or visit www.211-broward.org.