



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

Catherine L. Kort

Director of Fund Development & Marketing

ckort@icfs.org

(805) 206 - 8663

Ventura County Fair Attendee Receives More Than a Day of Fun; He Receives a New Chance at Stability for His Family

CAMARILLO, CA – 2-1-1 Ventura County Information and Referral call specialists from Interface Children & Family Services are on hand at the Ventura County Fair to provide in person support and to educate fair goers about the wide range of help they can get by calling, clicking or texting 2-1-1.

“No one should go hungry, be homeless or suffer without proper medical care – these are just a few of the vital services Interface can link community members to during the most fragile times of their life,” said Interface’s 2-1-1 Information and Referral Director, Kelly Brown. “More members of the community need to know Interface is there for them 24/7 to answer questions that provide a vital lifeline.”

2-1-1’s presence at the fair has already changed lives. A father of 3 teenagers was one of the approximately 200 people who stopped by the booth each day during opening week. He lost his wife to cancer last year and he and his kids were still struggling with the loss of their mother and wife -- emotionally and financially. To complicate matters, he had experienced a recent back injury leaving him unable to work. The loss of his wife’s income and the decrease in his own placed the family in a crisis situation with the potential of ending up homeless. 2-1-1 specialists were able to talk to him about advocacy programs to help him navigate his disability application issues, connect him to food pantries to provide immediate food, refer him to utility discount programs he could apply for to lessen his monthly bills, and encouraged him to contact his mortgager to see what kind of programs they may have to help borrowers in crisis.

“We also let him know that 2-1-1 could help them should they become homeless by getting them screened for eligibility for the county’s Pathways to Home program,” said Brown. “While we have these kinds of conversations over the phone all the time, speaking to this family in person was a special experience and we are so glad they stopped by our booth.”

Stories like these are far too common in our community and often overlooked because of not knowing where to turn for complex problems that threaten to overwhelm Individuals and their families. 2-1-1 connects people to the help they need when they need it in times of crisis or to prevent problems from reaching crisis proportion. While many 2-1-1 community partners such as school administrators, law enforcement, mental health and medical professionals are actively referring people in need to 2-1-1 services, Interface's 2-1-1 call specialists plan to participate at well-attended community events like the fair to help make 2-1-1 a household name.

"We want 2-1-1 to become a well-known resource within every household. If an emergency does not rise to the level of 911, there is almost always some way our highly-trained specialists can help," said Erik Sternad, Executive Director of Interface Children & Family Services. "2-1-1 has created and maintains the only resource database which includes over 1,150 programs available through 460 health and human service agencies that may not otherwise be known about or easily accessed by community members."

Having a presence at the fair is a first step to bringing awareness to the community and the projected 300,000 attendees. Since Interface is a non-profit and does not have a budget for advertising, the agency relies heavily on community based partners like United Way of Ventura County, First 5 Ventura County and local government to help increase visibility and access to community members. For more information on how provide 2-1-1 advertising, please contact Director Kelly Brown at kbrown@icfs.org or (805) 485-6114.

People seeking assistance through 2-1-1 can now call, click, or text to get connected to the services they need. The new addition of texting capabilities has enabled members of the community who rely on texting as their primary means of communication to easily get in touch with a 2-1-1 specialist. This has been especially beneficial for high-risk youth and young families.

If you or someone you know is in need of confidential, 24/7 assistance in the areas of food, mental health counseling, housing, health care, senior services, information during times of disaster, including road closures and shelters, call 2-1-1, text 898211, or click 211ventura.org.

About Interface Children & Family Services

Interface Children & Family Services is Ventura County and surrounding community's most comprehensive non-profit human services safety net. Founded in 1973, Interface works to prevent and heal the effects of child abuse, neglect and abandonment; domestic violence; family conflict and mental health issues. We have 24 distinct programs representing six core service areas, including mental health and trauma treatment, domestic violence and child abuse prevention, youth crisis intervention, human trafficking and justice services.

Serving approximately 35,000 local individuals annually, plus assisting 150,000 callers to the 2-1-1 Helpline across the state, Interface offers effective solutions to the urgent needs of families and individuals in crisis. This important work is sustained through donations and grants from individuals

and organizations, as well as by the work of dedicated volunteers and staff. For more information please contact Interface Children & Family Services at 4001 Mission Oaks Blvd, Suite I, Camarillo, CA 93012 by telephone at 805.485.6114 or visit www.icfs.org.

- ### -