

PRESS RELEASE



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**OVER 5,000 PINELLAS SENIORS RECEIVE LIFESAVING HELP FROM
211 TAMPA BAY CARES**

211 provides emotional support to Senior Citizens struggling to survive pandemic restrictions

Clearwater, Florida (May 10, 2021) – In July, 2020, 211 Tampa Bay Cares partnered with Senior Citizens Services to provide emotional support for 1,500 people over the age of 55. With the pandemic in full swing they knew there was a need to support Pinellas County’s most venerable population. Unbeknownst to them, the need would be far greater than expected.

As everyone wrestled with the effects of isolation from friends, family and support systems, individuals age 55 and over became increasingly more anxious, depressed, overwhelmed and frustrated. Fear of contracting the Coronavirus dominated their lives and for many, created a mental health crisis. Calls to 211 significantly increased from those over 55 years of age as mental health professionals answering the phone struggled to meet the demand.

In the 10 month period from July 2020 through April 2021, 211 professionals helped 5,643 individuals aged 55 and older by providing emotional support, crisis intervention and referrals to mental health and substance use services. The 211 team also fulfilled numerous requests for additional senior services. A 74 year old veteran who received assistance was overcome with emotion when he spoke to a caring individual who calmed his fears, directed him to much needed services and informed him about the Florida Veterans Support Hotline. Knowing that he was not alone, that there were caring people on the other end of the 211 line, provided an incredible sense of relief and instantly increased his mental wellbeing.

Micki Thompson, President and CEO at 211 Tampa Bay Cares, said, “It is an honor and a privilege to be a trusted place to call for emotional support when someone is feeling overwhelmed, anxious and alone.”

211 Tampa Bay Cares is available to help anyone in need 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Simply call 211 from any phone or text your zip code to 898211. Services include: financial assistance, transportation, mental health assistance and a variety of information and referral services. Visit our website at <https://211tampabay.org/> for more details or to access our extensive list of services available to everyone. If you would like to support the mission of 211 to keep hope alive, visit <https://211tampabay.org/how-you-can-help/donate/>

About 211

2-1-1 is an easy to remember telephone number that connects callers to information about critical health and human services available in our community such as locating a food pantry, child care, recreation programs, and volunteer and donation opportunities. 2-1-1 also lists health and nutrition programs, such as community fitness activities, classes on healthy eating, smoking cessation and free health screenings. 2-1-1 is a free confidential phone number available 24 hours per day, 7 days a week in 150 languages. 2-1-1's database contains approximately 3,000 resources with over 7,000 services. 2-1-1 TBC currently serves Pinellas and Hernando counties.

If you need help 24 hours a day with referrals or information on local non-profit organizations, please dial 2-1-1 or send e-mail requests to media@211tampabay.org.

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