



June 21, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Knox County's Information, Referral & Crisis Hotline Now Part Of Nationwide 211 System

Pathways Announces New Service with County-Wide Public Service Effort

Mount Vernon, OH – Pathways of Central Ohio announced today that their information and referral service is now part of the national 2-1-1 network. 2-1-1 is the new number to dial to reach the Crisis Hotline and Information Center of Pathways. The 2-1-1 service is fast, free and completely confidential for information and referral, or a short term crisis. The service is available 24/7 throughout the year and calls are answered by real people, trained professionals, with access to a comprehensive database connecting people to all the assistance available in Knox County.

“Our new 2-1-1 service, with one phone number to remember, simplifies what had been a complex web of phone numbers and contacts to reach critical personal assistance,” stated Kristin McCloud, Pathways Executive Director. “2-1-1 marks an important step in our continuing effort to connect the people of Knox County to the services they need most.”

For nearly 40 years, Pathways of Central Ohio has been providing information and referral services to the residents of the area, connecting them to vital personal human resources in time of personal crisis. Pathways continues to manage the database of social service agencies and community assistance in the county, handling over 22,000 calls annually.

More information on Knox County's 2-1-1 service can be found online at 211Pathways.com. The Crisis Hotline and Information Center will also be available by dialing (800) 544-1601. Speech and hearing impaired persons can call the Ohio Relay Service (800) 750-0750.

2-1-1 service is funded in part by the Community Mental Health & Recovery Board of Licking and Knox Counties, United Way of Knox County, Knox County Commissioners, City of Mount Vernon and the Community Foundation of Mount Vernon & Knox County.

About The 2-1-1 Initiative

2-1-1 is a national partnership between the Alliance of Information & Referral Systems (AIRS) and the United Way of America. The mission of 2-1-1 is to build America's capacity to strengthen the way people access help and engage in civic life. AIRS and the United Way of America have provided ongoing leadership to the 2-1-1 initiative to accelerate, lead, and support the implementation and sustainability of the national 2-1-1 system. On July 21, 2000, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) ruled that the telephone number 211 be designated nationwide as the number to call for access to community information and referral services. The FCC stated that there is "sufficient public benefit to justify the use of this scarce public resource." At the end of 2007, 2-1-1 serves over 219 million Americans – over 72% of the entire population – through 238 active 2-1-1 systems covering all or part of 43 states (including 26 states with 90%+ coverage) plus Washington DC and Puerto Rico. Every few weeks, those numbers increase. In Canada, 2-1-1 currently covers more than 20% of the population.

The mission of Pathways is to be the community's link for referral to crisis and information services, parenting and childcare training, and substance abuse prevention, all of which promote safe and self-reliant lifestyles for all individuals and families. In addition to managing the 2-1-1 Crisis Hotline & Information Center, Pathways also operates the following programs: Child Care Connections, Capable Parents, Prevention & Training and Parent Advocacy Connection. For more information about Pathways and their programs visit them online at www.PathwaysLC.org.

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