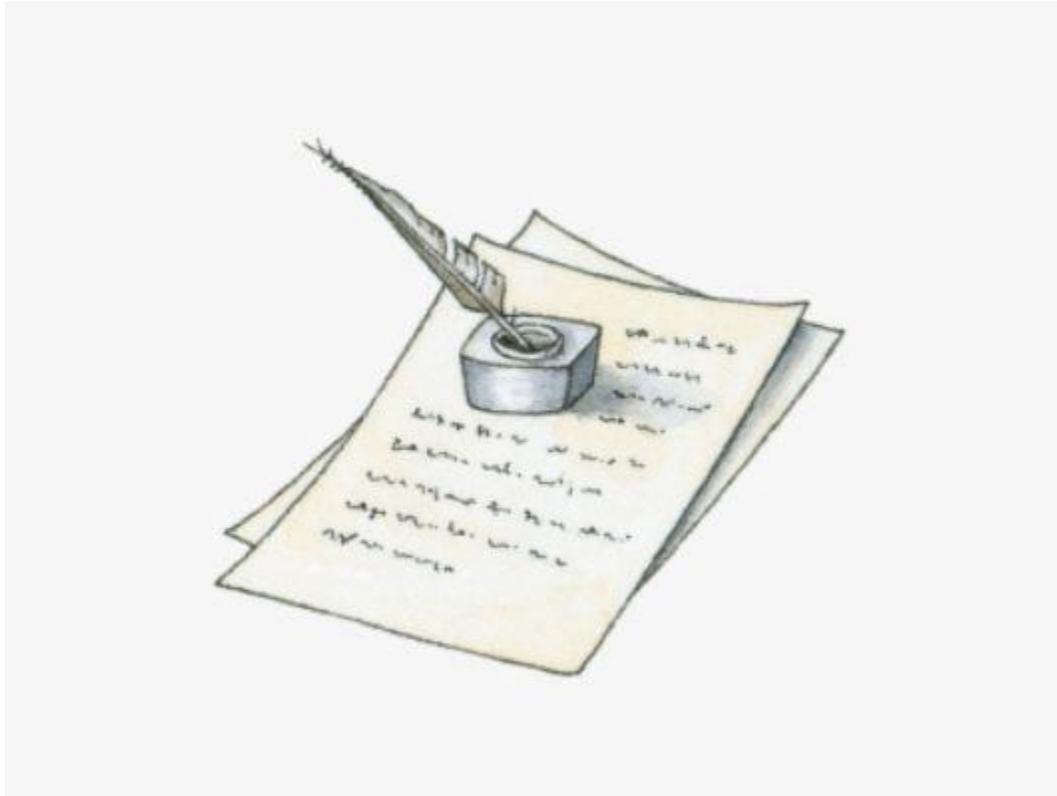


2-1-1 help is just a call or click away

9:48 p.m. EST February 10, 2015



Real help is just a call or click away

If you needed emergency housing, food, job training or family counseling, would you know where to turn? Every hour of every day, someone in our region needs essential health and human services, regardless of their income, but it can be daunting to navigate the landscape of available nonprofit and government services if you are unsure where to start.

2-1-1 is the right place to start. Powered by United Way and the state of New Jersey, 2-1-1 is a free, easy-to-remember phone number that connects you with a trained call specialist who can help you find the right resources and support in your local community.

Today, Feb. 11, is National 2-1-1 Awareness Day. We are proud to report that 2-1-1 call specialists have provided assistance to more than 70,000 callers — nearly 50,000 of which dialed in from South Jersey — across our region during the past year, connecting them to the right local organization that specializes in services such as basic needs, physical and mental health resources, employment supports and programs for older adults, children, youth and families. More than 5,500 calls originated from Cumberland County, with most callers seeking help with rent or utilities and affordable housing.

In addition to providing information and referrals to community members in times of crisis and in everyday situations, 2-1-1 takes the pulse of our region. The data collected by local 2-1-1 systems helps us identify prevalent or emerging community needs to facilitate informed responses. This type of coordinated effort can also be used to assess the region's ability to address large-scale issues and identify gaps in service to help meet critical or growing needs.

Locally, as our families continue to face significant challenges as a result of casino closings and job loss in our region, it is especially important to remember that help can be just a call or click away. Together, we can ensure that our neighbors receive support when they need it most. To find help in your local community, dial 2-1-1 or visit www.nj211.org.

Jim Cawley is president and CEO of United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey.

Newfield cannot afford to lose Fire Chief Mason

It was with deep concern and disappointment that I read a article in The Daily Journal (DJ-2/7) regarding the Newfield Borough Council and the Newfield Fire Company. Organization and government entities in Newfield have always worked together to ensure the welfare of town residents. Certainly there have been issues and political disagreements, but they have been resolved amicably and to the benefit of the residents.

That is until now!

Recently, the Borough Council has decided to remove Fire Chief Bill Mason from his position and also as a member of the company. Council even passed an ordinance giving itself the authority to do so. Mr. Mason is an extremely capable, qualified and knowledgeable firefighter. He has had extensive training and education and has trained many of the current members in firefighting techniques and the use of specialized equipment such as "the jaws of life." He and other members of the company have missed numerous meals, family affairs, social occasions and sometimes sleep in order to respond to calls from the community and surrounding areas. We, as a community, cannot afford to lose Bill Mason.

Could Chief Mason and the volunteer fire company appeal council's decision? Certainly! However, that would require funds that the company does not have; whereas the Council can continue to spend taxpayers' dollars to further their agenda.

We have many issues in Newfield. Our property taxes are spiraling out of control, the water tax has escalated from \$60 in February of last year to a minimum of \$105 in February of this year (for water that many residents will not drink). Our dump is open only one day a month (but not every month), several houses are for sale, many local businesses have closed, and there are only a few service organizations left in the town. The Newfield Fire Company is the oldest and has been here since 1908. The borough itself was established in 1924.

If the members of the Newfield Fire Company feel they cannot safely operate without their chief, and the borough contracts with a neighboring company, it will not be without cost.

Response time will be obviously slower. Taxes will have to rise in order to pay for our outside coverage, and there is a good chance that homeowners' insurance rates will rise without a local fire company. The citizens of Newfield would be much better served by a council that addresses the above stated issues rather than one that is interested in carrying out what appears to be a vendetta against individuals with whom council members disagree. In the words of Lord Acton, echoed by and paraphrased by many leaders and politicians, "Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely."

Alma McCarville