

NONPROFITprofile

211 SAN DIEGO

John Ohanian, chief executive officer



ORGANIZATION

Mission of organization: 211 is San Diego's primary source for community, health and disaster services. Our mission is to help people by connecting them efficiently to the service delivery system, and providing vital trend information for community planning.

Telephone: 858-300-1300.

Web site: 211sandiego.org.

Founded: Established as Guideline in 1970, and then Info-line, the organization has evolved to what we now know as 211 San Diego, which was launched in 2005.

Milestone: Firestorm 2007 put 211 San Diego on the map when the agency answered more than 120,000 calls from San Diegans in 10 days. This is the same volume that the agency previously answered in one year.

Annual income: \$2 million.

Expense allocation: 87 percent programs; 13 percent administration and fundraising.

Corporate support: N/A.

Corporate supporters: First 5 Commission of San Diego; county of San Diego; **Qualcomm**; **SDG&E**; and United Way.

Board chairman: Dr. Clyde Beck.

Board members: 16.

Employees: 28.

Volunteers: 100 volunteers contributing more than \$150,000 of volunteer labor for day-to-day operations; In addition, we maintain a database of more than 1,200 volunteers from Firestorm 2007.

Events: The Annual 211 Event will be held on May 12, honoring **Qualcomm** CEO Paul Jacobs.

Wish list:

- Federal approval of H.R. 211, "Calling for 211 Act."
- Additional sustainable funding of \$1million annually to properly serve the needs of San Diegans who are seeking critical assistance.
- Office building/facilities capable of surging during disasters and housing several nonprofit organizations, so that we can work together in a more streamlined fashion.

OFFICE ISSUES

Recent challenge: Providing better service with less funding than in previous years, while receiving a dramatic 60 percent increase in clients needing assistance, due to more awareness and the current economic crisis.

Measures of success: When people are looking for help they know to call 211 as well as they know to call 911 when there is an emergency. Also, when nonprofit groups look to 211 to assist them in providing services to their clients. And finally, when funders and government leadership look to 211 for information on community needs and trend analysis.

Smartest move: Moving towards a social enterprise model, which positions 211 to provide services to nonprofits, government, funders and corporations — in order to generate sustainable funding.

Missed opportunity: Not lobbying enough with other 211's for H.R. 211.

Misconception: People always think we are a government agency. We are not. We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

PROFESSIONAL INSIGHTS

Personal path to nonprofit work: Working at the Jewish Community Foundation gave me my first insight of how I could work and contribute to making a difference in our community.

Toughest aspect: Letting go of employees, especially in a difficult employment marketplace.

Most surprising aspect: Although I have worked in nonprofits for more than 15 years, I never had any interaction with government. It is very exciting to see our community at a very "macro" level.

Biggest pain: That the goals that we are working on take a great deal of time, which is difficult for an "impatient" person like me.

Greatest pleasure: Developing a staff and leadership team that are just as committed to 211 as I am!

INTROSPECTIONS

Best recent moment: Being in Washington, D.C., to lobby for 211 legislation.

Worst recent moment: Not being able to help my family evacuate during the 2007 wildfires.

Dream for another life: I've sat here for 10 minutes, typing and deleting, and as it turns out, I honestly would not change anything ... though I would definitely lean towards independently wealthy.

Downtime: Spending time with my family and squeezing in a round of golf.

Causes: My church seems to bring me back to what is really important in life.

Most like to meet: President Barack Obama (give me 5 minutes, maybe 10, and we will have a nationwide 211 that we can all be proud of — and truly better not only for our county, but the nation).