

## Who Ya Gonna Call? NOT Ghostbusters...

By Linda Greensfelder

It's no longer 1984, but back in the day, Ghostbusters was all the rage. They serviced a rather limited clientele with very specific and highly unusual needs, and even had a theme song that played like an earworm for many of us of that era. Fast forward to 2018 and I suspect the Ghostbusters service is no longer in business (but if you're curious, the original film and its multiple sequels can be streamed via Netflix).

Today when we have a problem and are unsure where to turn, the answer to *Who ya gonna call?* is not Ghostbusters, but 2-1-1. We can contact 2-1-1 by phone by dialing 211 or via the internet at [www.nc211.org](http://www.nc211.org). By phone, referral specialists are available 24 hours per day, seven days per week, in any language. The service is free and confidential. While NC 2-1-1 probably doesn't have a lot of resources in their database for dealing with suspected paranormal activity, they are an invaluable resource for a host of other issues.

Imagine yourself in these examples of real life situations:

You're concerned about mold in your home. After several basement flooding incidents, some mold has developed and you're worried it could be harmful to the health of your young children. You are a renter. How can he get the mold tested? And what are your rights as a tenant? *Who ya gonna call?* ... 2-1-1!

You're planning a volunteer/service trip out of the country and are wondering what shots are required, where to get them, the cost and possible insurance coverage. *Who ya gonna call?* ... 2-1-1!

You're behind a couple of mortgage payments and are worried about foreclosure. You want to understand how foreclosure works and if there's anything you can do to avoid it. Should you file for bankruptcy? *Who ya gonna call?* Again, 2-1-1 can assist in connecting you with resources that can address your concerns. And if requested, your referral specialist will follow up with you to ensure you've gotten the help you needed.

You recently purchased a new computer and would like to donate your old model to a worthy program. Who is in need of used computers? *Who ya gonna call?* ... 2-1-1!

You're in a relationship with someone who has been feeling pretty depressed lately. You want to raise the possibility of counseling, but would like to be ready to offer some referral options. This person currently isn't working and has no insurance. What resources are available locally? Call 2-1-1. A referral specialist can provide information about local resources that provide mental health assessment and treatment services regardless of ability to pay.

People call 2-1-1 with all kinds of real-life needs. 2-1-1 Counts ([www.nc211counts.org](http://www.nc211counts.org)) collects and reports data on 2-1-1 call requests. In the last year, Polk County's top five call-in request categories were Housing & Shelter, Healthcare, Mental Health & Addictions, Government & Legal and Utilities. As a general policy, NC 2-1-1 accepts in its database and refers only to entities that are non-profit or governmental agencies.

Polk County has been able to answer the *Who ya gonna call?* Question with ...2-1-1 since 2013 when Polk Fit, Fresh and Friendly (PF3) recruited a consortium of agencies to fund this service. We thank these organizations for their generous and continued support : Thermal Belt Outreach Ministry, Steps to Hope, Seasons of Life Home Care, Western Carolina Community Action, Region C Workforce Development, Region C Area on Aging, Hospice of Carolina Foothills, and Rutherford Polk McDowell Heath District.

Would you like to learn more about NC 2-1-1? Marla Brown, NC 2-1-1 Director Asheville Call Center, will be the speaker at the PF3 General Meeting, Thursday March 22, Noon to 1:00 pm in the Polk County Library Community Room. All are welcome!

*PF3 is a group of 120+ community members, leaders and health professionals working together to plan and implement effective strategies to promote wellness in our community. PF3 welcomes any individual who is interested in joining us to make our community a healthier place for all. For more information and a complete list of 2018 meeting dates, please visit our website at <http://www.polkfitfreshandfriendly.org>.*