



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **2-1-1 Ventura County Contact Specialists Helping Others During Own Evacuations**

CAMARILLO, CA – 2-1-1 Ventura County, a program of Interface Children & Family Services in partnership with the County of Ventura, local cities, First 5 Ventura, United Way of Ventura County and the Ventura County Community Foundation, is currently providing emergency information for those affected by and beginning their recovery from effects of the Thomas Fire. The 2-1-1 Ventura information and referral contact center has already received over 850 calls and “two-way” text conversations from Ventura County residents seeking information on road closures, school closures, shelter locations and evacuation areas. Contact specialists have been working 24/7 to ensure community members have this vital and accurate information, even when they themselves are being threatened by the wrath of the Thomas Fire.

2-1-1 Bilingual Call Specialist, Rosie, lives in Santa Paula with her family. They have been on high alert since Monday with bags packed, ready to leave at any moment. Yesterday, Rosie surprised her colleagues when she showed up for her shift at Interface.

“I couldn’t believe it when Rosie walked in,” said 2-1-1 Contact Center Supervisor Rossanna Guerra. “I kept asking her ‘what are you doing here’ and she said she needed to be here to help others in any way she could.”

Rosie went home when her shift ended with plans to return to the contact center in the morning, but overnight, the fire worsened. “Rosie called and said she was trying to find a way to get to work but all the roads were closed,” said Guerra. “It literally took that type of barricade to keep her from coming in. We are humbled by her and the rest of our staff for putting their evacuation plans on hold to be here for our community members in need.”

Residents affected by the fire and concerned loved ones can call 2-1-1, text keyword ThomasFire to 898211 (or Thomasfuego to 898211 for Spanish text) to register to receive up to date information on road closures, shelter, evacuation and recovery information or visit [www.211ventura.org](http://www.211ventura.org). Two-way texting has enabled members of the community to get

information about the Thomas Fire during this time of unpredictable power outages and jammed internet access.

“2-1-1 Ventura is operated by actual people, most of whom live right here in Ventura County and are affected by this dangerous fire themselves,” said Interface Executive Director Erik Sternad. “Their teamwork, care for each other, our clients and the public in need that I have witnessed this week has been overwhelming.”

Interface partner, United Way of Ventura County, has set-up the Thomas Fire Fund and a text-to-give campaign. 100% of the donations will support those in our community affected by the wildfires. Donations can be made by texting UWVC to 41444, online at [www.vcunitedway.org](http://www.vcunitedway.org), or calling 805-485-6288.

2-1-1 is a comprehensive information and referral service for Ventura County and surrounding areas connecting community members with information about health and human services available to them. If you or someone you know is in need of confidential, 24/7 assistance in the areas of food, mental health counseling, housing, health care, senior services, information during times of disaster, including road closures and shelters, call 2-1-1, text zip code to 898211, or click [211ventura.org](http://211ventura.org).

### **About Interface Children & Family Services**

Interface Children & Family Services is Ventura County and surrounding community’s most comprehensive non-profit human services safety net. Founded in 1973, Interface works to prevent and heal the effects of child abuse, neglect and abandonment; domestic violence; family conflict and mental health issues.

Interface has 24 distinct programs representing six core service areas, including mental health and trauma treatment, domestic violence and child abuse prevention, youth crisis intervention, human trafficking and justice services.

Serving approximately 35,000 local individuals annually, plus assisting 150,000 callers to the 2-1-1 Helpline across the state, Interface offers effective solutions to the urgent needs of families and individuals in crisis. This important work is sustained through donations and grants from individuals and organizations, as well as by the work of dedicated volunteers and staff. For more information please contact Interface Children & Family Services at 4001 Mission Oaks Blvd, Suite I, Camarillo, CA 93012 by telephone at 805.485.6114 or visit [www.icfs.org](http://www.icfs.org).