



## LEADERSHIP

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### Meet Community Activist Ronnie Oller

It is rare to meet someone possessing the experience and expertise of 2-1-1 board member Ronnie Oller. Ronnie is a nationally recognized community activist who has been serving communities in Florida for 20 plus years. In 2007, she received a Presidential Service award for her over 4,000 hours of community service. In 2008, she received the Woman of the Year award for her work in women's health. Ronnie has served in many volunteer capacities and is widely recognized as a champion of women's health, child development, and disease research.

Her remarkable history and experience make her a perfect fit for 2-1-1 Broward's board of directors. "Ronnie truly gets what 2-1-1 is all about and is an active member of the board. She is always willing to do whatever she can to make each 2-1-1 event and initiative successful," Board Chair Greg Haile said.

Ronnie's community activism is unparalleled. Over the years, she has served on the board of several premier organizations including the Susan B. Anthony Recovery Center, Boys and Girls Clubs, and NSU's Mailman Siegel Institute for Early Childhood Studies.

In 1997, Ronnie chaired the first independent fundraiser for diabetes, which raised \$97,000 for research; and for the past 10 years, she has organized Broward County's "Day for Children", which provides health services, education, and supplies for children, especially those at-risk and with special needs.

When asked of her personal motivation, Ronnie points toward her own childhood. She describes her sometimes turbulent upbringing as, "both a bad thing, but also a good thing in the sense that it motivated me to speak for those who are unable to speak for themselves." Those who know Ronnie know that she has done just that.

### **So, how did Ronnie end up on our board of directors?**

It wasn't until after she visited the 211 Broward crisis call center that she was sure she would serve on the board. During her visit, Ronnie observed as 211 operators counseled a woman in financial crisis. The caller initially stated she was near the point of suicide, but after receiving assistance and counseling from 211 operators, she felt courage and hope.

"I was amazed at the skills of the counselor to calm the caller and help her develop a plan that would begin to address her issues. I never realized that this service literally saves lives," Ronnie said. "I knew immediately that sharing and furthering the mission of 2-1-1 was something I wanted to be a part of." Ronnie has served as an invaluable member of our board since then and we thank her for her valuable contribution.