

211 SNAPSHOT: JEFF PAPUGA

For nearly eight years, Jeff Papuga has worked to help others every day: he's the Electrical Maintenance Technician at Columbus House, a New Haven nonprofit that advocates for and creates affordable housing to end homelessness. Jeff is responsible for the upkeep of the six Middletown apartments that provide emergency housing for families in crisis. When he's on the job, he often refers folks to 211, so they can access information and services to help them begin to thrive again.

But at different points in his life, Jeff himself has needed help – and has found it through 211. After his marriage ended, he struggled to find housing and dialed 2-1-1. A Contact Specialist listened to his situation, determined what benefits were available to him and helped Jeff find a home. When his rent went up suddenly, a 211 Contact Specialist explored his options and connected him with a rental assistance program – and when his electric bill skyrocketed, Jeff reached out again and found the support he needed.

Jeff describes reaching out to 211 as “easy,” and he admires 211 Contact Specialists’ expertise – and dedication to understanding people’s needs and connecting them to the right resources and programs. “They explain everything so you understand what your next steps are.”

He's thankful for his job, his home and the opportunity to help others every day – just as 211 has helped him. “These people do their jobs well,” he says. “Every time, they go above and beyond.”

