

211 SNAPSHOT: NANCY BAUER

"211 is a godsend," says Nancy Bauer. 211 changed her life – and likely saved her daughter's life – just a few years ago.

Like many teens, Nancy's daughter experimented with alcohol in high school. But she seemed to have it together: a vibrant, beautiful cheerleader featured each year on the honor roll. By the time she was in her early twenties, however, she was pregnant, and the baby's father had become so mentally abusive that a restraining order was required. Her drinking had taken a turn, too.



Nancy's daughter hid her emerging addiction well ("the addict's gift," Nancy says): she landed a managerial position in the East Coast branch of a national chain of high-end health spas. She seemed independent and successful.

Then COVID hit. Labor Department checks were not enough to keep the household going, and Nancy's grandson, struggling with ADHD, needed constant attention to focus on his learning on Zoom. A new boyfriend introduced Nancy's daughter to hard liquor. Her drinking spun completely out of control.

In fall 2020, Nancy visited her daughter in the hospital. She'd been admitted not for COVID treatment, but for detox. Her liver was grossly inflamed. "Mom," she begged Nancy, "I need help. I'm an alcoholic."

Nancy recognized an opportunity to take action: her daughter had finally admitted she had a problem. Nancy dialed 2-1-1.

"I was at my wits' end," she remembers. A patient, empathic 211 Contact Specialist answered the call. "This person was so compassionate, so kind. And they had answers. They tracked down detox centers and outpatient clinics that accepted Husky. Utility assistance. Care 4 Kids support. 211 understood that other supports needed to be in place so my daughter could focus on getting well."

Recovery isn't linear – it often takes a few attempts to get sober. And the impact on loved ones is brutal. "The lying, the deception, the denial..." Nancy recalls.

Three failed attempts and one year later, Nancy found herself preparing to admit her daughter to a detox facility in Danbury. A physical exam was required, and Nancy had offered to drive her daughter to her doctor. But when she called to confirm the morning of the appointment, something was off. “I could tell she was drunk.”

“I’m not going,” her daughter said.

Nancy was crushed. “That was it. I had to pull back. ‘I can’t talk to you,’ I told her. I was so angry. I went to work and tried to distract myself.”

A few hours later, however, she felt “an overwhelming sense of dread. Call it a mother’s intuition, a sixth sense kind of thing – I just knew something was really, really wrong.”

Nancy drove to her daughter's home and knocked on the door. No response. After trying a few times, Nancy broke in with a credit card. “I found her lying there. She was GRAY. Low pulse. I called an ambulance.”

Her daughter survived. The response team reported that she had been four times over the legal limit.

“I’m done,” Nancy decided. Other people were done, too – every person her daughter cared about, in fact. They set boundaries *they* needed to function. Nancy’s daughter lost a new boyfriend. She lost the right to see her son.

Luckily, her daughter rallied, ready to change her life. A call to 211 connected her to an intensive outpatient program. She showed up, went to AA meetings and worked the steps.

211 also linked her to supports that allowed her to focus on her sobriety: assistance with child care, housing, basic needs and more – because our Contact Specialists understand that an addict typically needs more than just a detox program. They need support so they can work on their recovery.

“211 understands that addiction is like any other disease,” Nancy says. “You can’t function while you’re sick. My daughter needed to focus on getting well. It’s like having cancer. To beat it, you need help in other areas. 211 gave my daughter the information and resources she needed.

And 211 is there all the time, no matter what. When you're close to an addict, you understand: when they ask for help, it may be a brief moment, and it may arrive at any time. You have to be able to get that help right then. 211 is there. It's just a phone call away."

This March, Nancy's daughter will celebrate three years of sobriety. She's back on her feet and has a job that allows her flexibility so she can see her son's baseball games – and invest time rebuilding her relationships and working her program.

Her recovery has revealed a depth of compassion Nancy finds "astounding" – her daughter lives differently now, acting with kindness as her guiding principle. Spotting a man passed out in the middle of the road one night, her daughter pulled over, got out of her car and worked with others to get him help. "She said, 'Mom, that could have been me.'"

Nancy says, "I thank God every day for the help we received. And anybody I know who's going through something, I tell them: 211 – that's the first call you need to make."

The number of CT residents facing hardship and needing help is on the rise; inquiries have increased by 300% since 2019, not including COVID requests. But 211's core state funding has remained flat since 2009.

Let's invest in 211 in 2025!