

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT: Christina Brown
840-9396 Work**

July 1, 2008

HeartLine offers Hope for High Gas Price Casualties

Rising gas prices and their effects are on all of our minds these days. While Americans of every socio-economic class are feeling the effects on some level, middle class and low income families are finding themselves in greater peril.

“The effect of rising gasoline prices shouldn't be viewed in isolation,” said Carol Clements, chair of the National Fuels Fund Network, which provides emergency financial assistance to poor families that cannot pay their electricity or home-heating bills. "All of these energy costs are having a compounding effect," she said. "We're seeing more people bumped from middle and working class to low-income and poverty situations."

For Oklahomans facing these challenges, hope can be found by dialing HeartLine 2-1-1 on their phone's keypad. HeartLine, Central Oklahoma's Community Connection, offers help, hope and information 24-hours a day. Calls to 2-1-1, which are free and confidential, provide connections to over 3000 health and human services resources in our area.

Call specialists at HeartLine who answer the 2-1-1 line are well trained with helping families deal with financial challenges and helping them to problem-solve and cope no matter what the cause.

Armed with an extensive database of nonprofit agencies and programs in a nine-county area in central Oklahoma, call specialists are able to quickly assess and address the needs of callers.

Families who are struggling may be surprised at the myriad of options for help that exist in their area, including programs that provide temporary gas vouchers. Other agencies in the database offer

help with meals and utilities. Low cost or free entertainment options for families are also in the database to help alleviate some of the stress caused by the rising financial worries.

”We make an effort to pair the individual calling with the closest agency which can meet their needs” says Penny, a HeartLine call specialist. HeartLine’s services provide information about services which can fill the financial void left by high gas prices in a kind and compassionate manner.

For more information on how to access resources, call 2-1-1. For information on HeartLine’s services, or to inquire about volunteer opportunities, call the HeartLine business office at 840-9396.

-###-