WE

Empowering care for seniors and persons with special needs through IT connectivity and unified communications

Friendship Community Care (FCC) is dedicated to providing compassionate, expert-level care and support to seniors and persons with special needs, helping them live dignified and enriched lives. FCC needed 100% uptime for their clients' network and voice services, but they were hampered by legacy systems from over ten different vendors. So they brought in Windstream Enterprise to modernize and simplify operations across their 48 locations throughout Arkansas.

At a glance

Industry

Healthcare

Customer

48 locations

Challenges

Multiple vendors

Network management difficulties

Unreliable legacy network

Expensive, outdated PBX systems

Solutions

SD-WAN

Cellular Broadband

OfficeSuite UC

WE Connect Portal

Results

100% uptime and high performance

Streamlined management

Improved operational efficiency

Enhanced patient care

Addressing the challenges

Friendship Community Care faced widespread operational challenges due to their outdated network and communications systems. Their legacy point-to-point VPN internet network was highly unreliable, plagued by frequent outages and performance issues. Internet connections were provided by multiple service providers and required extensive time and effort to manage individually, which was inefficient and frustrating.

The organization's phone systems were also outdated, relying on on-premises PBX systems from four different vendors. This setup meant no integrated dialing plans (short digit dialing) and frequent outages, so communication was challenging and unreliable. In addition, these PBX systems were nearing end-of-life and depended on expensive PRI and POTs lines from multiple vendors.

Managing this IT environment was time-consuming for Tim Ollie, the network engineer responsible for FCC's entire collection of network and voice services. With so many vendors, Tim was dealing with over 100 invoices each month, adding to his administrative burden.

Network uptime was critical for clients who depended on WiFi and video streaming, and any downtime resulted in a constant influx of trouble tickets and emergency fixes. As a result, Tim spent most of his time putting out fires, rather than focusing on strategic initiatives.

> *"I now have time to focus on making network improvements and innovations — instead of constantly calling ISPs with network issues."*
>
> **Tim Ollie, Network Engineer**
> Friendship Community Care

Consolidating vendors

To solve for Tim's challenges, Windstream Enterprise implemented a comprehensive software defined wide area network (SD-WAN) solution. This included dual access at all sites, with Ethernet and cable at the data center in an active/active configuration and dual cable connections

at most locations. Where only one cable was available, they deployed Cellular Broadband in standby backup mode. Windstream Enterprise provided all access connections, becoming the single point of contact for FCC and consolidating 100+ monthly invoices into just one.

To modernize FCC's phone systems, Windstream Enterprise deployed OfficeSuite UC®, replacing the legacy PBX systems. The transition included new handsets, as well as cordless phones at locations where employees are not always at their desks. They also introduced wireless phones that don't require an Ethernet connection for added flexibility.

The WE Connect customer portal provides FCC with visibility and control over their new SD-WAN and OfficeSuite services, capabilities they never had with the legacy systems. Tim Ollie noted, "My Windstream Enterprise SD-WAN Technical Service Manager is amazing — he is always available to help me make changes."

Delivering streamlined results

FCC's new reliable, high-performing network and voice services have transformed operations, as well as employee and client experiences. Network outages are a thing of the past, and all locations now have the reliable uptime that employees and clients depend on. "With Windstream Enterprise we are now getting 100% uptime for our network and voice services," Tim said. "Windstream Enterprise is my trusted partner, and their support teams are highly responsive and quickly resolve any issues."

Tim uses the WE Connect portal daily to monitor SD-WAN performance and make changes to routing and virtual local area networks (VLANs), while Windstream Enterprise manages all third-party access vendors on FCC's behalf. The single point of contact and consolidated invoice from Windstream Enterprise has significantly reduced Tim's administrative burden, allowing him to focus on network improvements and innovations. "Consolidating to a single network/voice vendor has been great," Tim said. "Whenever I have issues or need help, Windstream Enterprise moves rapidly to get it resolved."

The new unified communications solution also made a substantial difference. OfficeSuite UC eliminated phone outages, and the integrated short digit dial plan streamlined internal communications and eliminated long-distance charges. The flexibility to create subsites within locations has also proved beneficial, and FCC's employees appreciate the advanced new features. In addition, OfficeSuite UC runs over the SD-WAN, ensuring priority and quality for real-time applications.

Financially, FCC has generated incredible savings. The elimination of expensive internet, PRI and POTs connections resulted in an overall savings of 20%.

A future-ready infrastructure

With the support of Windstream Enterprise, FCC successfully modernized its network and voice infrastructure. The transition to a unified, reliable IT infrastructure has enabled FCC to provide uninterrupted services to their clients, enhancing the overall care experience.

With a robust, future-proof infrastructure in place, FCC can continue to fulfill their mission of delivering compassionate, expert-level care to those who need it.

"The reliability and performance of the new network and voice services have significantly enhanced the employee and client experience."

Tim Ollie, Network Engineer
Friendship Community Care

Our managed connectivity, communications and security solutions are innovative. Your business outcomes are imperative.

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