

CARLOS IN YOUR CORNER:

Genesee Sun Article # 2: 3-16-11

CONSUMER TIPS: CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS:

1. Do not respond or open unsolicited [called-Spam] e-mails which ask you to make a donation to the Japan Relief Fund via wire-transfer. Do not click on to links contained within those messages because they may contain computer viruses.
2. Beware of organizations with copy-cat names, web and e-mail addresses which are similar to but not exactly the same as those of reputable charities. Most legitimate charities websites end in “ org” rather than “ com”. Some bogus charities use names that sound or look like those of legitimate organizations to mislead you and con you of your hard earned money. For example, “foundation” in an organization’s name might be replaced with “ association” or other word to confuse donors.
3. To ensure contributions are received and used for the intended purpose, make contributions directly to known organizations rather than relying on others to make the donation on your behalf. Avoid door-to-door solicitations which request cash donations . Make donations to legitimate charities by credit card or check made payable directly to the intended charity. Do not make checks payable to individuals who solicit the donation. Last, legitimate charities do not normally solicit donations via money transfer services.
4. Do not fall for high pressure tactics used by Scam Artists and Con-Men to get you to make a charitable donation to their bogus charity.

5. Do not provide your personal-financial information nor your Social Security Number or other personal identifying information to anyone. Legitimate charities do not need your Social Security Number to process your donation. Many victims of Charitable Contribution Schemes also fall victim to Identity Theft Schemes.

6. When in doubt about the legitimacy of the charitable solicitation, contact the charity's web site [ending in "org" not "com"] or call them directly to verify that the solicitation that you received was made by that particular charity and not made by a Scam Artist.

7. DO YOUR HOMEWORK BEFORE YOU DONATE:

Contact your local Attorney General's Office, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Better Business Bureau [BBB] or Charity Navigator- <http://www.charitynavigator.org> to check out the legitimacy of the charitable solicitation.