

NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWS

Charitable Scams

On Tuesday January 12, 2010 the island nation of Haiti was rocked with a cataclysmic earthquake which caused millions of dollars in damage and has estimated casualties in the tens of thousands. With relief efforts underway and the world watching many of us are wondering what we can do to help the victims of this tragedy. Many are donating items of food, clothing, and money to assist to the people of Haiti and provide funds for relief efforts.

Hurricane Katrina and the 2004 tsunami have shown us that even in the midst of international attention some are willing to turn tragedy to profit through charitable donation scams. Reports from Vancouver and abroad are already surfacing in regards to door-to-door scams which are claiming the necessary relief funds. Many of these scams emerged literally overnight. In order to prevent



yourself from being charitable fraud victim and ensure your donations are delivered properly please take note of a few simple tips you can utilize and help those in need properly.

→ Check the charity's business and charitable number if someone comes to your door. Only legitimate charities are given these numbers and donors can check the status of a charity on cra.gc.ca/donors or view complaints of the charity through the Better Business Bureau

→ Ask the volunteer what percentage of your money goes directly to the victims. Some charities have high overhead costs and/or act as "middle-men" to larger charities and take a fee for themselves.

→ Ask for a charitable receipt for your taxes if you give a larger donation (Usually \$10 or more). This tax receipt should have all the organization's information on it including charitable number and address.

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Fraud Awareness Month



March is the international "Fraud Prevention Month". This is a great time to not only take a look at any vulnerable areas in our lives that could make us a victim to a fraud but also refresh on what the

most prevalent frauds are right now. There are various forms of frauds and like the above article spoke of, the same fraud can recycle itself and take on a different name. The Canadian Anti-Fraud Call Centre, known as PhoneBusters, has listed 2 of the top reported frauds of December as being prize and emergency frauds.

It now seems that everywhere we go there is some kind of contest or draw that we are asked to enter. Although it would be nice to win a free vacation simply by filling out your name, number and other personal information, you should be cautious when giving your valuable information to anyone. Ask yourself what it could be used for and whether this information could be sold to other companies for advertising purposes. The other side of the prize scam is being told that you have in fact won a prize. The first indication that this is a scam is if you don't remember entering the contest in the first place. The main goal of this scam is to extract something out of the victim, whether it be credit card information

or money. You should never have to pay a fee for a prize you have won.

The emergency scam, has become more popular recently. The way it works is the victim receiving a call or email from a person claiming to be a loved one or a friend or theirs, they are in an emergency, and they need financial help. There are different stories that these con-artists have given ranging from "I'm in another country and my wallet and passport was stolen" to "I was arrested and need help to make bail". Some will even go as far as requesting that the person not tell anyone else in the family because they are so embarrassed by the situation or don't want the rest of the family to worry about them which leaves the victim without a way to verify the story. Unfortunately this scam does target seniors because the caller could claim to be a grand-child.

To learn more information on frauds and scams please go to either: www.competitionbureau.gc.ca/fraud or the PhoneBusters website www.phonebusters.com or call 1-888-495-8501. To report online fraud you can go to the RCMP initiative, RECOL, at www.recol.ca. If we all take part in recognizing and reporting this criminal activity then hopefully we can prevent others from falling victim to them.

Neighbourhood Watch in YOUR Community

Where should you feel the safest? The answer should always be your home and your Neighbourhood. Whether you already feel that your community is a very safe place or are starting to see the signs of deterioration (graffiti, car or home break-ins) it is ALWAYS a good time to become involved and be proactive in your community. Why wait until something happens?

Starting in Canada in the early 1980s, Neighbourhood Watch has grown to become a vastly well recognized program. Over the decades it has taken on different shapes and sizes with numerous success stories but this is only with the active role of concerned citizens. Who is responsible for the safety of our Neighbourhoods? We all are! By being

aware of what is going on in our area and getting to know the people who live around us we all are taking part in crime prevention starting right at home.

When people care enough to help their neighbours and assist the police, we work together as a team to improve community safety. That is what Neighbourhood Watch is all about. It's about residents working with the police to create a safe and secure environment for our families. Just think, if you are looking out for your neighbour and they are looking out for you, you now have double the set of eyes on your property. On a bigger scale, the more people on

your street who are involved the stronger your network is.

A key element of a

Neighbourhood Watch group is the sharing of information with each other, the Toronto Police Service and the Crime Prevention Association of Toronto. Having the tools in place to receive information and knowing who to

contact to give information is an essential part of Neighbourhood Watch. If you're interested in starting Neighbourhood Watch in your community please contact the CPAT office at **416-225-1102** or email: **office@cpatoronto.org**



Neighbourhood Watch in Apartments

Neighbourhood Watch is not only for residential areas with houses. If you live in an apartment building or condo you can also form a Neighbourhood Watch group.

The interactions in apartment buildings have a slightly different dynamic than that of a residential area. Residents have more opportunities to come into contact with their neighbours in the hallways and elevators because of the close proximity. This allows for a great framework to build a Neighbourhood Watch community.

Establishing a Neighbourhood Watch can be more accessible for buildings as well. Many buildings may already have space to hold meetings (community room/common area) that you can take advantage of. Posters to notify the residents of meetings and events can easily be posted on bulletin boards and elevators.

For any questions about this program or any of CPAT's other programs please contact the office at the information above.



Membership & Donations

Get involved and support your local charitable organization - your membership is important to CPAT. Please join us by filling out the convenient form enclosed in this newsletter. Membership is \$10 for an individual/household; \$5 for a senior citizen; \$50 for a non-profit organization; and \$100 for a corporation. **If you are part of a Resident's Association, Rate Payers Group, Business Improvement Area or other group or corporation, please encourage them to become a member of CPAT.** If you are not already a member, please join.

If you would like to make a donation, in addition to your membership fee, please feel free to do so and you will receive a charitable tax receipt of any contribution of \$10 or more.

Remember, your membership and donations helps CPAT provide our programs in your community and all across Toronto. Our various programs include Neighbourhood Watch, personal safety & K.E.Y.S. (Keeping Every Youth Safe) and are presented year-round to diverse communities. Thank you for your generosity and support of the Crime Prevention Association of Toronto!



EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS Call 9-1-1

- Homicide
- Serious injury
- Assaults
- Serious accident
- Robbery
- Officer needs help
- Shots fired
- Suspicious person
- Burglary
- Fire or explosion
- Weapons
- Drug Dealing
- Theft (In Progress)
- Crime in progress

NON-EMERGENCY SITUATIONS Call (416) 808-2222

- Noise Complaint
- Dog running loose
- Lost or recovered property
- Theft (after the fact)



THE CRIME PREVENTION ASSOCIATION OF TORONTO
 (416) 225-1102
 Charitable Number:
 13415 3915 RR0001



CRIME STOPPERS
 416-222-tips (8477)

Call to give anonymous information about a crime.



DISTRESS CENTRE
 (416) 408-4938



PHONEBUSTERS
 1-888-495-8501