

# Consumer Alert!

December 17, 2007

## **A TIME FOR GIVING --- TO THE RIGHT PERSON**

This is the season to be giving, just be sure you are giving to the right person. A lot of hard earned money is donated to charities this time of year, but not all donations end up helping the needy. Just because it is the season of love, hope and joy does not mean that criminals have stopped committing fraud. And stealing your charity donations can be an attractive opportunity for criminals.

Charity fraud can take several forms:

1. Someone pretending to be with a legitimate charity.
2. Someone who sets up a fake charity, often with a name that is similar to a well known charity (The U.S. Cancer Society was a fraud that caught many victims; the American Cancer Society is the real thing.)
3. Someone who steals or embezzles funds from a legitimate charity.

We hate saying this, but you need to make sure the “charity” that is about to receive your donation is worthy of the gift. To protect against charity fraud:

1. Research any charity before you make the first donation. The Better Business Bureau maintains a website ([www.give.org](http://www.give.org)) with information on hundreds of charities. Local charities can be found at [www.denverbbb.org](http://www.denverbbb.org).
2. Any charity in Colorado that collects donations of \$25,000 or more in a year must file with the Secretary of State. Phone 303-894-2200, extension 6407.
3. Before you mail your donation or use your credit card to make a donation by phone or Internet, look up the number or the website and verify that you are sending your money to the legitimate charity, not to a criminal.



**Need help or have a question?**

**Call the Adams/Broomfield DA Information Line:**

**303-835-5639**