



For Immediate Release

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Protect Your Identity Online and with Community Shredding Event

GREENSBORO, NC - The growth of social networking sites is undeniable, the most popular being Facebook with over 400 million users worldwide. As much fun as this can be, users need to be aware of the potential risks associated with being too forthcoming on a public site.

“When you innocently mention that you’re going to be out of town, that’s potentially telling the world when your house will be vacant,” said **Linda McKnight**, Director of **Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Greater Greensboro (CCCS)**. “Even listing daily activities can let strangers know your routine and put you at risk. If you’re too revealing, you’re asking for trouble, as predators often cruise these sites hoping to steal your personal information for their gain. With just a few clicks of the mouse, they can learn a lot about you.”

CCCS recommends the following precautions to take when utilizing social networks:

- Be smart about what you reveal about yourself or your family. Less is better.
- Make sure everyone in the family understands what is acceptable to share online and what’s off-limits. Realize that information a youngster innocently provides on a social networking site can compromise the entire family.
- Be selective when you allow access to your site. Keeping your circle small, including only those that you personally know can safeguard you.
- Look at everything you post through the eyes of the crook. See if you could piece together who you are and where you live. Even clever screen names can often be decoded by a thief.

In addition, CCCS has partnered with **The Better Business Bureau** to help members of the public securely dispose of old records and cellular phones at a **FREE** shredding event on October 23rd. **Cintas** is providing two mobile shredding trucks to dispose of personal documents (e.g. old checkbooks, bank statements, medical paperwork, junk mail, credit card solicitations, etc.), and **Verizon Wireless** will collect old cell phones. “You would be surprised how much information is on an old phone,” McKnight said. “Identity thieves can use this data to socially hack into other personal information.” Used cell phones will be wiped of all data and donated to local women’s shelters for domestic violence victims.

What: Free Document Shredding and Used Cell Phone Disposal
Where: Greensboro Coliseum (1921 West Lee Street)
When: 10/23/2010, 9:00am-12:00pm

A recent survey by Consumer Reports revealed that fifty-two percent of adult users of social networks such as Facebook and MySpace have posted risky personal information online. Twenty-four percent of the complaints associated with ID theft received by the Federal Trade Commission were from individuals between the ages of 20-29, alarmingly similar to the demographic of those who frequent social media sites.

If your identity is stolen, it can take 30 hours or more and hundreds of dollars to restore your good name and good credit. “It’s much better to protect yourself against ID theft, than to pick up the pieces after being victimized,” McKnight said.

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About CCCS

CCCS of Greater Greensboro is a division of Family Service of the Piedmont, Inc. Our goal is to assist families and individuals resolve financial problems by avoiding bankruptcy through budget counseling, credit counseling, housing counseling, and debt solver programs. Through these efforts we can help you to achieve your financial goals and regain a sense of financial well being. All counseling services through CCCS of Greater Greensboro are free of charge. Visit www.thedebt.doc.com or call (Greensboro) 373-8882 or (High Point) 889-6108 for more information.