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Awareness Key to Ensuring Donations Have Impact

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Rockville, MD – The well-known phrase ‘let the buyer beware’ is great advice for consumers, but donors to charitable organizations should heed the same message this holiday season. The end of the year is a busy time for donations of clothing and household items, yet some of the groups accepting donations operate as for-profit companies, with little or none of the proceeds going to legitimate charities.

Goodwill® urges individuals to do their research before deciding to which organizations they will donate. First, donors should check with the state attorney general or secretary of state’s office to find out if a charity is legitimate. Second, they should check with a charity-rating agency such as Charity Navigator or GuideStar, or use online resources such as GreatNonprofits or Philanthropedia to find out more about specific charities — including how much of their revenue goes to overhead and administrative costs.

“At this time of year, it’s natural to drop unwanted items at the nearest collection bin, but the true value of those donations may not be realized,” said Jim Gibbons, president and CEO of Goodwill Industries International. “Taking the extra time to ensure your donation goes to the right cause can make a difference to families in your own community.”

Consumers should be cautious of donation bins that don’t clearly state the mission and contact information for the organization. More and more states nationwide are now requiring that unattended bins be clearly marked, but it is important for people to make informed choices about their donations.

“Some for-profit entities and fraudulent charities can deliberately mislead donors by using slightly changed names of established groups,” said Gibbons. “Community-focused organizations like Goodwill have spent decades building the public’s trust and can readily inform consumers of the real value of their donations.”

Donations to Goodwill are sold in local stores and online. The revenues then fund job training programs and support services that help people with workplace challenges and disabilities to achieve and maintain economic independence and an increased quality of life. In 2010, more than 2.4 million people benefited from Goodwill’s career services. By giving to Goodwill, donors are playing a vital role in helping people go to work.

To find the location nearest you, call 413-442-0061, or visit www.goodwill-berkshires.org.

PRESS CONTACT

Frank Engels
413-441-2633
efceogib@nycap.rr.com