



THE ~~NOVA~~DEBT CONNECTION

A Garden State Consumer Credit Counseling Organization

February 2005

What Our Clients Are Saying...

"Novadebt really has helped me get my credit back on track and reduced my stress level phenomenally! As an 18-year old college freshman, I was bombarded with credit card offers, both on and off campus. I ended up maxing out three cards and had creditors calling me every day. As a full-time student, I wasn't working enough to pay my minimums which were exactly 'minimum'. When Capital One referred me to Garden State, the credit counselor was so helpful and genuine. I felt like I was talking to an old friend. He helped work out a monthly payment that was workable in my small budget and it was so easy. Now almost two years later, I've graduated college and almost completely paid off my debt!! Novadebt gave me a new-found respect for the dollar and helped me to budget my money so that I am sure I can pay ALL of my bills every month! Thank you Novadebt!!"

Community Impact

Source: Becky Winters, Education Consultant for Novadebt

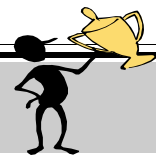
Novadebt reaches into our communities to help with identified needs. We have established an Outreach group, consisting of employees who actively volunteer in the neighborhoods of our office locations. Through these efforts, we experience the needs of the people we service, try to bring a moment of peace to someone experiencing hardship, or just bring a smile to someone's face.

We have established a close relationship with the United Way. In October 2004, our employees visited Multiple Sclerosis patients and day care centers, worked at a food pantry, built with Habitat for Humanity, prepared a party for a local YMCA and participated in the Breast Cancer "Making Strides" Walk. In November, we hosted a blood drive in conjunction with the Central Jersey Blood Bank. In December, employees graciously gave gifts through the United Way "Snowflake Wishes" to

children, adults, and seniors who needed some extra attention!!

Many of us have family or friends who are involved in the military. To help support those who serve our country, Novadebt is sponsoring a platoon of soldiers. We are working with "Adopt-A-Platoon", which is a non-profit organization that provides support to troops stationed overseas via letters, cards, and care packages. Employees write weekly letters to our adopted soldiers. On a monthly basis, we collect items to send in a "themed" care package.

2005 is already filled with projects. As each effort is completed, our Outreach group grows and our spirits become refreshed. It just goes to show what one helping hand can do to make our communities stronger. Novadebt is willing to help!



Employee Spotlight ... **KIM COLE**

Novadebt's employee spotlight for February shines on **Kim Cole**.

Kim is a Housing Counselor and has been with Novadebt since September 2002. Kim counsels people in all areas of Housing—default loan counseling, pre-purchase and reverse mortgages. In addition to her daily responsibilities, Kim is always the first to volunteer to do everything possible to help anyone in need, including other employees. She is also

very active in Novadebt's Outreach Program. To name a few Outreach efforts led by Kim, she coordinated training for employees so Novadebt can prepare tax returns for low income tax payers in the community. She also co-coordinated the Breast Cancer "Making Strides" Walk in October 2004. She is currently a nursing student and plans to utilize any skills learned in nursing school towards clients at Novadebt. Kim enjoys being able to help people who are desperate to make decisions that will benefit them in the future. In Kim's spare

time, she likes to read, go to the movies with her husband, and play with her dog, "Dancer". With all that she does, Kim is still able to assist housing clients to the best of her ability. We don't know how she does it, but she has earned the nickname Miss "O", short for Miss Octopus. Kim feels that she was nominated based on the strength of her Housing team.

Thank You, Kim, for being a part of Novadebt's team!



How To Avoid ATM Surcharges

Source: Bankrate.com



Here are some tips for avoiding ATM surcharges:

- Use ATMs owned by your bank, thrift or credit union. Bankrate.com's research shows banks offer free ATM use to their own customers. Include this in your research when shopping for a bank.
- Ask if your financial institution belongs to a selective surcharge network. If it doesn't, talk to a manager about joining.
- Many online banks and brokerage firms offer surcharge-free ATM access.
- Try to take out enough money from your pay-check or checking account to cover your cash needs until your next paycheck.
- Get cash back when using a debit card at a supermarket or store.

9 Ways To Cut Commuting Costs

Source: Bankrate.com



1. If you must drive every day, figure out the cheapest route. Altering your path from major, clogged highways to side roads can save you money.
2. Consider telecommuting. You'll save on fuel and wear and tear on your vehicle. Plus, you'll save money on a professional wardrobe and lunches out.
3. Alternate your commute. Consider cheaper ways to get to work such as walking, biking, or telecommuting.
4. Consider carpooling. Carpool matching services are available for free in many communities. Do a search online for a local carpool center, or call your local government.
5. If you live in an area that has good public transportation, see if you can get around without the car. Maybe you can get by with one car instead of two.
6. When using mass transit, be sure to ask about multiple-ride discount cards, monthly passes and any other deals for riders.
7. Ask if your employer offers discounted bus or train passes. Sometimes, it's a little advertised perk that can save you \$20 to \$40 a month.
8. Ask your insurance agent whether driving your car less often for your daily commute will result in a lower insurance rate.
9. Your credit profile is an important factor in your insurance rate. Check your credit report and make sure it's an accurate picture of you.

Novadebt Notes

Source: Cindy Ferraro, Creditor Relations Manager for Novadebt

As you may already know **Bank of America** acquired **FleetBoston Financial Corporation** on April 1, 2004. If you are a Fleet cardholder, you may have noticed the Bank of America logo has been added to your statements. Bank of America will advise you in writing of any changes to your accounts well in advance. Most account numbers will remain the same, however, please review your statements each month and contact us if there are any changes.

You should continue to receive statements in the mail from each of your creditors every month. Please be sure to review these statements each month and contact us if there are any discrepancies. Also, please be sure to monitor your balance and call us when your account is close to being paid in full. We appreciate your assistance in this matter. If you would like us to review your statements for you, please send your information to:

Please remember that your creditors do not send statements to our agency.

225 Willowbrook Road
Freehold, NJ 07728

Serve Up Supper for Under a Dollar

Source: American Center for Credit Education



While it's possible to be a budget savvy diner and eat an inexpensive meal out on the town, it is without question, cheaper to make something at home. The problem is that work, children, and a seemingly endless list of social obligations leave us time-starved and too tuckered out to tackle meal preparation at home. Pre-packaged meals serve as useful stand-ins, but will still cost substantially more and offer significantly lower nutritional value than something made with fresh ingredients.

Homemade meals don't have to keep you running to the store for exotic ingredients or chained to the kitchen for more time than you have to spare. With a crock-pot, a handful of fresh ingredients, and a few others from the pantry, you can make a meal while you're at work (or while you tend to details at home), for under a \$1 a serving. Imagine arriving home from a hard day to the smells of dinner—hot and ready.

Here's how:

Combine the following items in a crock-pot or cook on low for 7-9 hours:

- 2 pounds of stew meat, cubed
- 2 onions, diced
- 2 tsp. salt
- 4 carrots, sliced
- ½ tsp. pepper
- 6 potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 cans tomato soup
- 2 stalks of celery, diced
- 2 soup cans of water

Serve with a loaf of French bread and voila, dinner (for six) is served.