

Source: *Becky Winters, Education Developer for Novadebt*

Community Impact

With the arrival of March, our thoughts are beginning to turn towards spring...the time when all of us begin our "spring cleaning", both inside our homes and out. Our Outreach group here at Novadebt is no different and felt that March would be a great time to work on a *Day of Caring* Project with a Monmouth County organization that needed some "helping hands"!! The United Way of Monmouth County (UWMC) *Day of Caring* offers local companies and their employees the opportunity to volunteer at a nonprofit agency. Groups in the past have volunteered to clean beaches, garden, read to children, paint, landscape and do office work at one of the agencies the UWMC partners with throughout the year. To no surprise, the need was extensive and as a result, employees will be working on two projects in March with two different organizations.

The first project will involve working with Monmouth Day Care Center, which is located in Red Bank, New Jersey. This is a nonprofit childcare center dedicated to the care of children ages two months to five years. The agency serves a low income population and combines principles of early childhood education with a warm, home-like environment. Novadebt volunteers will interact with the children by reading, coloring, or just visiting and assisting where needed.

Our second project will be coordinated with the Food Bank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties. Located in Neptune, New Jersey, this organization accepts donated and surplus perishable and nonperishable food from local and national sources. The food is then sorted and packed for distribution to over 200 area nonprofits. Novadebt volunteers will work one morning assisting in sorting the donations and repacking for distribution.

FOOD BANK



Our employees are made aware of hundreds of needs each day. Working as a partner with the United Way of Monmouth County helps us relay those needs and assist in bringing together community resources to meet health and human care needs through the community partnerships we nurture. The end result is helping make the lives of others a little easier, one day at a time.

What Our Clients Are Saying...



"Dear Mr. Greenberg:

I wanted to take this opportunity, as a brand new customer, to tell you how grateful I am for your company. I got in touch with this program through Bank of America. Unfortunately, due to an illness with my brother, our credit card debt got high and paying the minimum was not helping this situation any time soon. I then was directed to a Debt Settlement Company, not being aware of how this all works and thanks to Bank of America, they were attempting to put the card in litigation and I was directed to Kim Cole, who was wonderful. Kim put me in touch with Damian, who did an intake on the situation and I then had the pleasure of speaking with Joe Rosenberg, who was a doll. I was on your website and saw the wonderful staff of people you have and well I must be honest, I am in Marketing and I am an observer and your company is one of the best I have ever seen. I wish that I was closer to you so I could bring you treats for your establishment. However, my mom lives in Toms River and I pass the Freehold exit throughout the year and Freehold is a beautiful town, so I hope to pass by with treats for your staff at some point. Lastly, I ended another pleasant conversation with Patricia Siliga, who informed me that my boyfriend's paperwork was received through fax.

Mr. Greenberg, I don't know you at all, but thank you for establishing a wonderful company that helps people. The best of success to you and your staff."

RS, New Jersey

No Fees, Please

Source: American Center for Credit Education—ACCE

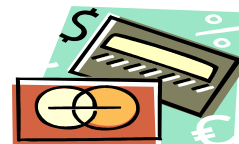
With one quick swipe of your debit card (or push of a button), you can buy a meal at a fast food restaurant, fill up your gas tank, pay for an online purchase, or get cash at an ATM, without even having to do as much as pause to sign a receipt. Making safe and fast financial transactions—large and small—has never been easier. But according to a report released by the Center for Responsible Lending, overdrawing your account when making a debit card purchase has never been costlier.

The fee for overdrawing an account, by debit or check, has risen 11% in the last five years, to an average of \$27.40 per transaction. The Center points out that

these record-high fees often end up being imposed on small-dollar debit transactions, say the quick stop at the convenience store for a pack of gum and sunflower seeds. In a case such as this, what should have cost a person about \$3 ends up totaling more than \$30.

Many consumers mistakenly believe that their debit card will be rejected if there are not sufficient funds in their account. However, an increasing number of financial institutions are allowing these transactions to be processed and then charging their customers with hefty non-sufficient funds fees, as high as \$35.

To avoid having to pay unnecessary fees, never assume your card will be rejected if you do not have sufficient funds in your account and never use your debit card if you are uncertain about your account balance. Immediately recording all debit card transactions in your checkbook register and reconciling your checking account monthly can also save you the hassle and headache of an overdrawn account.



Write a Will

Source: American Center for Credit Education—ACCE

Death is never an easy subject to broach—perhaps that’s why a majority of Americans, 55 percent according to a 2006 Findlaw.com survey, do not have a Will. There’s no doubt that making a Will requires tough choices: Who will raise your children in your absence? How will your assets be distributed and what will become of your personal property when you die?

If you are concerned with the answer to any of these questions, you need to make writing a Will a priority. When you die “intestate”, or without a Will, the court will determine who your heirs are and how much of your property each one will receive, regardless of what you may have wanted. This process can be cumbersome and expensive, creating more stress in an already difficult time. A Will is also the only way to appoint a guardian for your children.

At this point, you may be raising objections to writing a Will: I’m young and healthy; I’m more likely to die if I create a Will; I don’t want to hassle with lawyer fees; I don’t have time to gather all the necessary information; The process is just too complicated.

Indeed, few people plan to die prematurely, but the reality is that everyone dies at some point. When you have a Will, you can relieve some of the confusion and anxiety that your loved ones might be feeling by making your wishes clear. Legal software will run you about \$50 and will walk you through the Will-writing process and can help you create other legal documents, including a Living Will and a Financial Power of Attorney. (If you opt to use this type of software, make sure you follow the provisions exactly.)

If the prospect of writing a Will on your own seems daunting, or if the matters of your estate are complicated, it may be your best interest to consult an attorney who specializes in estate planning. Fees will vary, but you can expect attorney fees to range anywhere from \$150 to \$1,000, so make sure you take the time to consult a number of different attorneys and ask them to put their fee in writing.

If you have already created a Will and it’s been more than three years since you last updated it, or you’ve had a change in your life, such as birth, death, marriage, or divorce, it’s time to revisit your will to make the appropriate changes.

