



THE novadebt CONNECTION

A Garden State Consumer Credit Counseling Organization

May 2005

What Our Clients Are Saying...

"This has been a wonderful experience for me. The initial interview session took away all of my embarrassment for getting into this situation in the first place. The counselor never once made me feel inadequate. Once I had committed to the package, I felt a tremendous pressure lifted off my shoulders. It is great to know that I am finally getting out of debt and it's amazing to realize that I never needed all those credit cards after all. I am managing just fine without them. Thank you to all of your staff for the wonderful service provided to me, both initially and on an ongoing basis. I would highly recommend your company."



Community Impact

Source: Becky Winters, Education Consultant for Novadebt



As Novadebt employees, we are always searching for opportunities to service the needs of others. During the month of May, we will be helping some of our "four legged furry friends". Our agency is sponsoring a Pet Adoption Day at our Freehold, New Jersey location. The Monmouth County SPCA and Jersey Shore Animal Center will bring pets from their respective facilities, who are "excited and ready" to go to caring homes. There will be demonstrations by a K9 unit, therapy dogs, and trainers. It is a nice feeling that, as result of our efforts, there will be some new homes for our animal friends!

We are also beginning a new relationship, this month, with the "Reach Out and Read" program at the Pediatric Health Clinic at Jersey Shore Medical Center in Neptune, New Jersey. The "Reach Out and Read" program trains doctors, nurses, and volunteers to advise parents about the importance of reading aloud and gives books to children at pediatric check-ups from six months to five years of age, with special focus on children growing up in poverty. By building on the unique relationship between parents and medical providers, "Reach Out and Read" helps

families and communities encourage early literacy skills, so children enter school prepared for success in reading. A group of employees received orientation and training late April and will begin having fun with the kids! On a weekly basis, Novadebt employees will go to the clinic and read to the children, while they are in the waiting room. Additionally, we hope to collect new books to bring with us for the clinic and accumulate gently used books to encourage each child to take home one book for older siblings. We are excited to participate in a program that makes literacy promotion a standard part of pediatric primary care. The children have the opportunity to grow up with books and a love of reading.

Our "Adopt A Platoon" is getting ready to be deployed. The soldiers have shared with us a little bit about themselves and their reasons and thoughts on their military service and what it brings for them. This communication gives us a little glimpse as to what they face day in and day out. We thank them for their service and will keep them, along with all of our other military personnel, in our thoughts as we celebrate Memorial Day.



Employee Spotlight ... Janett Elmore

Novadebt's employee spotlight for May shines on **Janett Elmore.**

Janett began employment with Novadebt in August 2001. Janett is a Certified Credit Counselor who consistently gives Novadebt 110%. She counsels potential clients with their finances and outstanding debts. Her client's love her and look forward to speaking with her. Janett cares about her clients and it shows through the positive feedback she receives from her surveys.

Janett is always satisfied at the end of the day if she is able to help at least one client by educating them on debt management and at the same time, helping them to see the light at the end of the tunnel. She always enjoys hearing a client say, "You've made my day."

Janett plans to continue developing her skills with credit reports and bankruptcy knowledge in order to offer clients the most up-to-date information relative to the new bankruptcy law.

Janett is an asset to Novadebt and has a great impact on her co-workers as a leader and a trendsetter. She always

volunteers for overtime to help the company when needed. Janett is an important piece to the Novadebt Counseling Department.

Janett is a retiree from AT&T after 27 years of service as a Facilities Management Supervisor. In her free time, she is very active in her church. She enjoys watching DVDS, as she is an amateur film critic. Her favorite time, is her time spent with her 3-year old grandson.

Thank you Janett, for being a part of Novadebt's team!



Credit Scores and Credit Reports—How They Affect You

Source: Dan Slocum, Training Manager for Novadebt

Most of us are aware that our credit score is used by lenders to decide whether our application is approved or not. Our score will also be a factor in the interest rate we'll pay, as well as other terms of the loan. Over the years, our credit score has become a factor in other areas that have nothing to do with borrowing money. One of those areas is the insurance field. Insurance companies often use our credit score to determine the premium we will pay for our insurance. The automobile and home insurance industries usually include our score (or some equivalent calculation) to price our policy. While this may not seem fair—you may ask "what does my credit score have to do with my driving ability?" - the insurance companies have been able to show a relationship between the two. Therefore, knowing your score is important, even if you don't plan to borrow money.

Virtually every employment application and application for apartment rentals authorize the employer/rental agency to obtain a copy of your credit report. The information on your credit report can influence whether or not you get hired or are approved to move into an apartment. Therefore, you should know what's on your credit report before you apply for a job or an apartment rental. This will give you the opportunity to make sure everything is accurate and, if there are errors, the chance to dispute them and have those errors removed.

While we can obtain our credit scores and credit reports from a number of sources, most of the time we just receive raw information that can be confusing. It's not enough to just have a copy of your credit report or know what your score is—the keys are to understand what the score means and what steps you can take to improve it.

Novadebt has recently introduced a Credit Report Review service. For a modest cost, we will review your report with you for accuracy and give you information on how to correct any errors. In addition, we not only provide your credit score, we can give you the most important factors that help determine your score. Then we'll give you suggestions on how to improve those factors and increase your score. While we want to help you get out of debt, we realize that almost everyone will need a car or mortgage loan and want to help you get the fairest terms. Call us at 1-866-855-7733 and we will be happy to help.



Protecting Your Credit While Traveling Ensures A Happy Homecoming

Source: Your Credit Card Companies (www.YourCreditCardCompanies.com)

With summer on the way, many Americans are starting to plan family vacations and quick weekend getaways. Unfortunately, travel today isn't as easy as it used to be. The process has become a juggling act of luggage, boarding passes, and identification cards at the airport or heavy traffic, crowded rest stops and busy gas stations when traveling by car. All of this adds up to a greater opportunity for identity thieves to ruin your good time and good credit.

Your Credit Card Companies (www.YourCreditCardCompanies.com), a consumer credit education resource center providing information on all aspects of consumer credit, offers the following tips for credit-safe travels and happy homecomings:

- **Plan ahead:** To avoid overloading your mailbox, arrange to have your mail held at the post office for the duration of your trip.
- **Leave a paper trail:** Save receipts to check them against your credit card statements to ensure all charges were authorized. Destroy receipts before disposal.
- **His & Hers:** When traveling with family members, even spouses, each should carry different credit cards linked to separate accounts. This way, if a wallet is lost or stolen, you won't be stranded for a long period of time.
- **Avoid carrying large amounts of cash:** Using credit or debit cards while traveling is not only safer (members of *Your Credit Card Companies* do not charge customers for unauthorized purchases), but sometimes more valuable. When traveling internationally, credit cards may assist in securing better exchange rates. Also, credit card companies can refund disputed charges and may offer extra guarantees or warranties.
- **Lighten up:** Carry only the personal information absolutely necessary for vacation, such as a passport or driver's license.
- **Keep it close:** When traveling by air, always keep copies of these important documents in a separate part of your luggage, such as a carry-on bag. And always keep cards in your wallet, not in the hotel room.

Source: **Your Credit Card Companies** is a group of financial services companies that have joined together to strengthen consumers' understanding of our commitment to customers and how our industry works. Through its Web site (www.YourCreditCardCompanies.com) and other outreach methods, *Your Credit Card Companies* aims to serve as a centralized resource center for consumers on numerous aspects of consumer credit, including credit education, credit reporting and scores, identity theft and fraud, and financial tools and resources for students and teachers. Its members are: Chase Manhattan Bank USA, N.A.; Citigroup; Discover Card; MasterCard International; and MBNA.

"The Novadebt Connection" does not assume responsibility for any advice given. It is up to the reader to determine if advice is safe and suitable for their own situation.

