

# Community Outreach



By: Becky Winters, Education Developer

It is hard to believe that 2010 is coming to a close. This has been a busy year for Novadebt employees, as we have reached into our neighboring communities trying to make burdens a little lighter, provide an ear to listen, or make someone aware that we care about their needs. Novadebt employees are closing out the calendar year by playing "Secret Santa" through the United Way of Monmouth County's *Snowflake Wishes* in New Jersey and helping out with holiday needs of those served by a local nonprofit—Genesis II for Families, in Minnesota. By the time both efforts are completed, the holidays will have been made a little brighter for over 100 individuals, young and old, through gifts and support from someone who lets them know that we care. In these hard economic times, perhaps for just a moment, they can forget about everything else going on in their life and just be a "kid" again. Isn't that part of what the holidays are all about?

Novadebt employees in our Freehold, NJ office have held a weekly "Bag of Bucks" fundraising effort throughout 2010. Every Wednesday, our office staff has the opportunity to make a \$1.00 donation in support of our Outreach efforts. One person's name is selected from all donations made and the winner receives 50% of all money collected. It is amazing how much we have been able to help in our communities, just from our weekly collections. Contributions collected from January 1, 2010 through November 30, 2010 have been donated to the following organizations:

- American Red Cross, for Haiti relief
- 180 Turning Lives Around, assisting victims of domestic violence
- Manna House; a transitional housing facility
- Monmouth County SPCA
- Louisiana Disaster Recovery Foundation
- United Way of Monmouth County *School Time Wishes* effort
- Jersey Shore University Medical Center Child Protection Center
- Freehold Area Open Door Food Pantry, in coordination with our annual food drive
- United Way of Monmouth County *Snowflake Wishes* effort
- Genesis II for Families

In closing, all of us here at Novadebt wish you a Happy Holiday Season and hope that 2011 will bring renewed goals and growth in your lives. We are proud of the fact that not only can we help with financial education and counseling services, but on a personal level assist those who have other needs as well. Novadebt employees will extend a helping hand and continue our ongoing relationships. We have already begun our efforts for 2011 with involvement in *Project Homeless Connect* and will continue to seek other opportunities. A parting thought is to "put others first by continuing to remember those in your own communities who need our help."

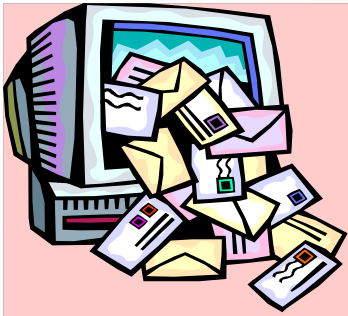
Novadebt is happy to announce that we have tapped into the Facebook social networking space to expand our mission of assisting families and individuals in need. Facebook allows us to further connect with our clients, partners and the general public as an additional resource to provide free financial education, community outreach and counseling services.

Social networking tools such as Facebook are all about community building. Our site gives our followers a different perspective of the services Novadebt offers as well as to provide current and relevant educational information about managing personal finances; all delivered in real-time.

We look forward to interacting with our clients, partners and the general public in this friendly format and hope they use our site to connect with us and others with similar interests.

To follow us on Facebook, visit our Web site at [www.novadebt.org](http://www.novadebt.org) and click on the Facebook icon on the main page.





# Dear Kim...

Welcome to the newest section of our newsletter...**Dear Kim.**

My name is Kim Cole and I am the Education Outreach Coordinator for Novadebt. In my 7 years with Novadebt, I have been asked all kinds of financial related questions. The common thread is that everyone feels they are the only one with that particular question, and they are wrong.

At Dear Kim, our clients will have the opportunity to ask their questions relative to personal finance and view answers to those questions in print.

We will select a few questions each month to respond to in the newsletter. If your question is not one of the lucky questions chosen for print, we will still provide you with a reply directly.

Novadebt will only publish your first name and state, and we will happily accept anonymous questions.

Please send your questions via email at [kcole@novadebt.org](mailto:kcole@novadebt.org) or through the mail:

Novadebt  
Attn: *Dear Kim*  
P.O. Box 160  
Adelphia, NJ 07710-0160

**Dear Kim:**

I have a few collection accounts showing on my credit report that I am paying off. In the meantime, I am trying to rent an apartment. What advice do you have for people who are seeking housing while having marks against them on their credit report? I would prefer an apartment complex over a private rental. Are there any kinds of “bonds” or “insurance policies” available that a landlord might consider in addition to the standard security deposits?

Rich

**Dear Rich:**

This is a very common question due to the current state of the economy. I would suggest first getting a copy of your credit report from [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com). You will need to use the most up to date information. If you have been paying bills such as electric and cable on time each month, you can request a letter of good standing from them. You may also include a letter explaining your past hardship with your application. I am very conservative about recommending a co-signer, but this is an option. If you have a friend or family member willing to take this credit risk, it may improve your chances. I know that some landlords are willing to take a larger security deposit and in some cases charge a higher rent for tenants with a poor score. You may suggest this to a landlord, if you are turned down for an apartment. Lastly, you could put together a list of references that will attest to your credibility and stability for the landlord. Unfortunately, there is no quick fix for a poor score. To my knowledge, there is not an insurance policy or bond that can help in this situation and I would be very leery if you come across an agency that offers this product.

Good luck,  
Kim