



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BBB Urges Caution in Contributing to Charities Connected to Virginia Tech Shootings

In the aftermath of Monday's horrific shootings at Virginia Tech, the Better Business Bureau (BBB) is issuing a caution to area consumers and businesses to be thoughtful and prudent before contributing to a charity or outreach connect with the tragedy.

Edward Johnson, president and CEO of the Better Business Bureau, cautions area consumers and businesses to be very sure that the contribution they make will do precisely what they want it to do.

"These are emotional times, and we all want to help", Johnson said. "Just don't be rushed into making a contribution. Many well meaning folks will be establishing charitable organizations to help with the victims or their families. Unfortunately, many of these well meaning charities are unsophisticated and not really capable of handling significant sums of money. Even more unfortunately, some charitable solicitations are at best deceitful and, at worst, a plain sham."

The BBB cautions patience, care and the following advice:

1. Be wary of appeals that are long on emotion, but short on describing what the charity will do to address the needs of victims and their families.
2. If you contribute, do not give cash. Make a check or money order out to the name of the charitable organization, not to the individual collecting the donation.
3. Watch out for excessive pressure for on-the-spot donations. Be wary of any request to send a "runner" to pick up your contribution.
4. Do not give your credit card number or other personal information to a telephone solicitor. Ask the caller to provide you with written information on the charity's programs and finances.
5. Do not hesitate to ask for written information that describes the charity's program(s) and finances such as the charity's latest annual report and financial statements. Even newly created organizations should have some basic information available.
6. Be wary of charities that are reluctant to answer reasonable questions about their operations, finances and programs. Ask how much of your gift will be used for the activity mentioned in the appeal and how much will go toward other programs and administrative and fund raising costs.

7. Remember the opportunities to give will disappear when the headlines do. continue. The tragedy aftermath will not

If you have questions, contact the **BBB** at 202-393-8000. You can also inquire online at www.mybbb.org.

The BBB is nonprofit organization established in 1920 to advance responsible, honest and ethical business practices and to promote customer confidence through self-regulation of business. Core services of the BBB include business reliability reports, dispute resolution, truth-in advertising, consumer and business education.

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