

## Avoiding a Scam

- ✦ **Be cautious of con-artists who use the holidays to play on your emotions, and your greed. The following should help you to avoid becoming a victim.**
- ✦ Never give a caller your credit card, phone card, Social Security, or bank account number over the phone. **It's illegal for telemarketers to ask for these numbers to verify a prize or gift.**
- ✦ **Listen carefully to the name of a charity** requesting money. **Fraudulent charities often use names that sound like a reputable, well-known organization** such as the American Cancer Association (instead of the American Cancer Society).
- ✦ Ask for a financial report before you donate; a reputable charity will always send you one.
- ✦ Investigate before you invest. **Never make an investment with a stranger over the phone.** Beware of promises that include the terms "get rich quick," or "a once in a lifetime opportunity."

### **Some other seemingly classic scams:**

- ✦ Someone posing as a bank official or government agent asks for your help (in person or via the telephone) to catch a dishonest teller. You are asked to withdraw money from your account and turn it over to him or her so the serial numbers can be checked or the money marked. You do, and **you will never see your money again.**
- ✦ A couple of strangers tell you they've found a large sum of money or other valuables. They say they'll split their good fortune with you if everyone involved will put up some "good faith" money. You turn over your cash, and you never see your money or the strangers again.
- ✦ Someone offers you a chance to invest in an up-and-coming company with a guaranteed high return. The idea is that you invest and ask others to do the same. You get a share of each investment you recruit. They recruit others, and so on. When the pyramid collapses everyone loses - except the person at the top.