

FRAUD ALERT

March 2018

Sympathetic Contributions

If you participate in social media, you have, no doubt, seen the various fundraisers that people post via the GoFundMe page. In the wake of the recent tragic school shooting massacre in Florida, we are seeing many fundraising efforts for the victims and their families.

The Bucks County Crimes Against Older Adults Task Force warns consumers to be very careful when considering making a donation this way. Scam artists will even take advantage of tragedies.

GoFundMe's official stance suggests donors should only contribute payments to users they know personally and trust, but that's not exactly possible when a tragedy like this happens. Here's what you can do, ~~though~~, if you want to donate safely:

- Steer clear of pages with minimal information provided. For example, a request for donations may only mention a homeless family that is too ashamed to ask for help and fail to mention a child, hospital bills or any specific problems.
- If there is a picture posted of the potential donation recipient, always perform a reverse image search with Google. If you're using Chrome, just right click the main photo on the GoFundMe page and select "Search Google for image." If you see a ton of results, scammers probably stole that photo to use for their fake campaign.
- Check the campaigner organizer's social media presence. Scammers make fake profile pages right before they make the fake campaigns. A quick search of their name should pop up their Facebook page and more. Beware of those with a Facebook page that is brand new and with only a few friends and posts. Sound the alarm!
- Reach out and contact them directly. GoFundMe makes it easy to contact users running campaigns. Just click the little green envelope next to their name and ask them some questions. Scammers will either not respond, or send more false information you can easily spot.

GoFundMe can be a dangerous place if you've got a big heart and money burning a hole in your pocket, but it can still be a force for good, if you're careful.

The following is important Information from GoFundMe.com:

GoFundMe is dedicated to empowering people to help people, and an overwhelming majority of campaigns on our platform are safe and legitimate. Fraudulent campaigns make up less than one tenth of one percent of all campaigns. In the rare instances where people create campaigns with the intention to take advantage of others' generosity, GoFundMe takes swift action to resolve the issue.

Our policy is simple and strictly enforced: It is not permitted to lie or intentionally deceive donors to a GoFundMe campaign for financial or personal gain.

For more information visit <https://www.gofundme.com/> .

Monthly Fraud Alerts courtesy of...

Bucks County Crimes Against Older Adults Task Force

Bucks County District Attorney's Office
215-348-6344

A Woman's Place (AWP)
1-800-220-8116

Bucks County Area Agency on Aging
215-348-0510

Bucks County Office of Consumer Protection
215-348-6060

Bucks County Coroner's Office
215-348-3852

Bucks County Register of Wills
215-348-6265

Network of Victim Assistance (NOVA)
1-800-675-6900

www.crimesagainstolderadultsbucks.org 24 - HOUR HOTLINE: 1-800-490-8505