

# FRAUD ALERT!

From the Office of Seniors vs. Crime

## Check Out Charities Before Giving

Are your mailboxes filling up with year-end solicitations for charitable donations? Deciding to whom to give is not always easy. There are no laws that require charities to use a specific percentage of your donations on charitable purposes. It is up to each of us to make sure our charity giving is used wisely for those in need, instead of lining the pockets of for-profit fund raisers and questionable organizations. The Citrus County Sheriff's Office recommends:

- ✓ Make an annual charitable "*giving*" budget and list – and stick to it! Keep your list to a manageable number of charities.
- ✓ Don't judge a charity by an impressive sounding name. Many organizations have names similar to other well-known charities.
- ✓ Ask for a written description of programs, staff, finances, and tax deductibility of the charity, such as an *annual report*.
- ✓ Most telephone appeals are made by salespeople employed by professional fund raisers. Most of your donation goes to the fund raiser, not to the charity.

For detailed reports that rate charities and tell you how your donations will be used, go to these national charity watchdog resources on the Internet:

- [www.give.org](http://www.give.org)
- [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org)

For information on local charities, contact the Better Business Bureau:

- [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org) or call your local BBB.

If you have a problem or need assistance call us at **352-249-9139**

Or visit us at **4093 N. Lecanto Highway Beverly Hills**, Next to Main Street Grill & Restaurant.

**Our hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday From 8:30am to 1:30pm and you do not need an appointment. And our service is free.**