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## ALERT!

With the “Season of Giving” only a few weeks away, charities and donation centers will be working in overdrive to provide a wonderful holiday season for many less fortunate families in the community. Whether by telephone or in person, many of us will be asked to help support these organizations by volunteering or donating, and in the spirit of the season many will oblige.

That being said, it is important to know who you’re donating to. An employee of mine saw a warning on the website for the Autism Society, saying that individuals in Ohio were raising funds for an organization called the Autism Spectrum Disorder Foundation and implying it was on behalf of the Autism Society. The Autism Society had not given permission to any non Autism Society chapter or affiliate agency to solicit funds on their behalf. This is a scam!

This example is a grim reminder that not everyone who appears to be working for a good cause actually is. If you are approached this holiday season to solicit funds, be sure to do your homework on each prospective organization. Don’t be afraid to ask questions, as a legitimate charity will be more than happy to answer them for you. A good one to ask is whether the agency is registered to raise money in Ohio and what their charitable license number is. Another is how much of each donation actually goes to charity, rather than administrative costs. Being informed can help protect you and your family from scams and ill-intentioned individuals this holiday season.

Stay safe,  
Sherri Bevan Walsh  
Summit County Prosecuting Attorney

If you would like to be added to our e-mail list to receive alerts and other useful information from my office, please call (330) 643-2796.