

HOPE Initiative UPDATE
Helping Others Progress Economically
United Way's financial stability partnership
September 25, 2007

Community Outreach

The Dark Side of Debit

Ever confused on whether to select credit or debit (pin required) when you present your debit card? Are you like me and just randomly chose to sign or enter your PIN? I encourage you to read a *Consumer Report* education piece on the issue. Print this out and share it with your co-workers.

Read the Consumer Report at <http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/money/credit-loan/debit-cards/the-dark-secrets-of-debit-9-07/overview/the-dark-secrets-of-debit-ov.htm>

Financial Football

Yes, it is that time of year again. NFL action ba-by! Well, I am a little more excited about this version of football than the real thing. You get to select your NFL team and march down the field by answering financial literacy questions. Go ahead and test yourself! It might be the only way your team wins this year!! Pass it on to your older children or co-workers. Put it on your computer in labs where teens have access.

Learn more at http://www.practicalmoneyskills.com/english/at_school/trainingcamp/ff/index.php

Church Bulletin

The HOPE Initiative is in the process of developing a one-page flier to be inserted into church bulletins to expand the community's financial education. Do you think your congregation might be interested in this information? If so, email me.

Volunteers

After the holidays wind down in January, are you looking for something to occupy your time? The HOPE Initiative is looking for some volunteers for our Volunteer Income Tax Preparation (VITA) sites. You will be IRS trained and certified. The testing is not too difficult. We plan on having an informational session on the issue so stay tuned. Recently, this program completed over 100 income tax returns for the community saving hard working families over \$20,000 in tax preparation. (not to mention the amount of dollars saved by steering people away from the Refund Anticipation Loans that are out there). In addition, the sites promoted the Earned Income Tax Credit which is the largest federal program focused on moving people out of poverty. It is estimated that over 20% of eligible recipients do not file for this refund!

Financial education is something from which we all can benefit. More importantly, those with the least amount of money in their pocket can benefit the greatest. Learning skills such as budgeting, prioritized spending, and understanding credit can be a determining factor in keeping your electricity on. Let's help the community learn to help themselves. Self empowerment is key. Offer a financial education class through the HOPE Initiative in your work place or community center today!

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