



Town of Atherton

DEPARTMENT OF POLICE



July 11, 2023

Subject: Protecting Our Seniors from Scams

Dear Atherton Residents,

I hope this letter finds you all in good health and high spirits. As your Chief of Police, I feel compelled to address a growing concern that affects our most vulnerable members—our vulnerable seniors. I am writing to raise awareness about elder scams and emphasize the importance of protecting ourselves and our loved ones against these malicious activities.

Elder scams have become increasingly prevalent in recent years, targeting seniors through various means, including phone calls, emails, social media, and even in-person interactions. These scammers employ deceptive tactics, preying on the trusting nature and vulnerabilities of our elderly population. They often pose as representatives from financial institutions, government agencies, or charitable organizations, seeking personal information, money, or access to financial accounts.

The consequences of falling victim to these scams can be devastating, both financially and emotionally. Many seniors have lost their life savings, experienced a decline in their mental health, and even suffered a loss of trust in their own communities. It is our responsibility as a caring and supportive community to act and help protect our elderly residents from these unscrupulous individuals.

Recently in Atherton, two of our elderly residents fell victim to financial scams. In the first incident, the resident was contacted by phone by a scammer posing as a police officer, advising the resident his bank accounts had been compromised. He told the resident he could fix the problems if the resident sent him a cashier's check for \$70,000, which they did. In the second incident, scammers contacted elderly residents in person at their residence, and advised their grandson had been in a serious car accident who needed \$10,000 right away. The residents then gave the scammers \$10,000. In both incidents the residents were told not to tell anyone about the incident. This is a key phrase which means it is a scam.

To that end, I would like to suggest a few important steps we can take together to help stop these scams:

Education and Awareness: It is crucial that we educate ourselves, our elderly family members and elderly neighbors about common scams and their warning signs.

Communication Channels: Establish reliable communication channels with family members, friends, and trusted neighbors. Encourage residents to reach out if they have encountered any potential scams, ensuring they feel supported and heard.

Support Networks: Encourage the formation of support networks within our community, where seniors can share their experiences, seek advice, and help one another stay vigilant against scams. Establishing a culture of trust and support will empower seniors to recognize and resist fraudulent activities.

Financial Protection: Advise seniors to safeguard their personal and financial information. Encourage them to be cautious when sharing sensitive details over the phone, online, or in-person. Encourage the use of strong passwords and regular monitoring of financial accounts.

Volunteer Programs: Initiate volunteer programs that aid seniors, such as helping with errands, managing finances, or accompanying them to important appointments. By offering support and building strong relationships, we can reduce the risk of isolation and vulnerability.

Contact the Police Department: Often, victims of financial scams are too embarrassed to tell family members or contact the police. It is extremely important that the police department be contacted so we can initiate an investigation, help to recover the lost money, and work to identify and arrest the scammers. The phone number for our Police Dispatch Center is 650-688-6500.

Remember, protecting our seniors requires a collective effort from the entire community. By raising awareness, fostering support networks, and providing the necessary resources, we can create an environment where our elderly residents feel safe, secure, and valued.

Thank you for your attention and commitment to this important cause.

Best regards,



Steven D McCulley

Chief of Police