

## Background

Scamming of older adults in North Carolina rode the wave of 21st-century technological advancements to a massive scale with far-reaching impacts.

According to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 17% of American senior citizens (65+) have been targeted by financial scams, and it is not only the affluent who are victimized. These instances vary in severity, but extreme cases are not uncommon.

In total, a 2015 study estimated that older Americans lose \$36.5 billion each year to fraudulent groups and scam artists. Due to the pertinence of this issue and its devastating impact on the lives of victims, it is imperative to become educated on the topics of fraud prevention and consumer protection.

## Contact EngAge Seniors



Pictured Above: Addie Esposito (Grade 11), Dave Kirkman (Consumer Protection Division of NC DOJ), Michael Friedman (Grade 12)

Visit Our Website! [www.Engageseniors.org](http://www.Engageseniors.org)

**Michael Friedman:**

[Michael\\_friedman@caryacademy.org](mailto:Michael_friedman@caryacademy.org)

**Addie Esposito:**

[Addie\\_esposito@caryacademy.org](mailto:Addie_esposito@caryacademy.org)

## Protecting Yourself and Your Loved Ones from Elder Fraud: How to Avoid Falling for Common Scams



ENGAGE

*Students and Seniors working together for the common good*



## The Grandparent Scam: One of the Most Prevalent Scams Among Seniors

The Grandparent scam involves a scam artist playing the role of the victim's grandchild, pretending that he/she has been in an accident and is in trouble. The scam artist impersonating your loved one may claim that he/she is in jail, in the hospital, or even in a foreign country. "Please don't call mom and dad!" the scam artist pleads before asking the senior to wire large amounts of money immediately.

The scam artists are able to make the story extremely convincing, instilling a sense of urgency in the victims. Continue reading to find out how you can protect yourself from the emotional and financial trauma caused by these scams.

## Scam Prevention Checklist

- ☐ Ask **questions**. Scam artists will hang up if you are skeptical or if they can't answer a question. Ask questions only loved ones could answer.
- ☐ Create a **code word** with your grandchildren for when you are unsure who you are talking to.
- ☐ **Be wary** when someone asks you to send money immediately, **even if the reason sounds valid**.
- ☐ If the caller claims to be someone you know but is calling from an unfamiliar number, **ask to call them back** from a number that you know is theirs.
- ☐ **Resist pressure to act quickly**. Scammers pretend there is an emergency, giving less time to think logically.
- ☐ Remember: court systems and hospitals **do not accept gift cards as payment**
- ☐ **Refuse** to send the money and consider reporting the scam to 1-877-5-NO-SCAM
- ☐ Attend a **Scam Jam** or **Shred-A-Thon**
- ☐ Consider a **credit freeze**
- ☐ Join the **"do not call" registry**, which filters out calls from telemarketers and scam artists
- ☐ **Sign up** for free fraud watch alerts at [aarp.org/fraud](http://aarp.org/fraud)

## What's Being Done in NC?

### Partnership for Consumer Education

To fund fraud awareness/ education efforts in NC

### NC Senior Consumer Fraud Task Force

To unite "law enforcement, consumer networks, crime prevention agencies" with older adults

**SCAM Jams:** educational events to inform consumers about fraud and how to protect themselves

**Shred-a-Thons:** oftentimes occur in tandem with SCAM Jams, event attendees may shred old financial documents in massive shredder

### Volunteer involvement:

Victims Assistance Program: one-on-one guidance for high-risk seniors

Fraud Fighters Program, trained speakers give educational presentations on consumer protection in various venues frequented by senior citizens (churches, for example)

