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PRESS RELEASE

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WesleyLinks Churches Announce Senior Fraud and Identity Theft Series

WesleyLinks, a network of 65 churches organized by **Wesley Community Services**, will host the first in a series of informational programs on senior fraud and identity theft at 12 noon on Wednesday, April 6, 2011. Hamilton County Commissioner Greg Hartmann will be the guest speaker. The meeting will be held at Westwood United Methodist Church, 3460 Epworth Ave, Cincinnati, Ohio 45211 and is open to the public. Please RSVP at (513) 661-2777 (extension 5428).

Fraud and identity theft is a major problem for seniors, with over thirty percent of these crimes committed against the elderly. Commissioner Hartmann was instrumental in creating the **Hamilton County Coalition to Stop Fraud, Scams and Abuse**. The Coalition is composed of 30 local, private and public agencies. “Unfortunately for Hamilton County, there are too many criminals willing to take advantage of our most vulnerable populations,” said Commissioner Greg Hartmann. “Opportunities to

educate our seniors, such as the efforts by WesleyLinks, are critical to helping our elderly residents protect themselves from fraud and scams.”

Stephen Smookler, Executive Director of Wesley Community Services, stated, “Wesley Community Services is pleased to support the efforts of our 65 WesleyLinks churches in addressing senior fraud and identity theft. There is a wealth of information in the community that churches can take advantage of to help any senior in trouble with a fraud or scam.” Eileen Simpson, WesleyLinks’ Convener, added, “My hope is that every church involved with WesleyLinks will have a representative attending this initial meeting in our program series on fraud prevention.”

WesleyLinks is an interdenominational consortium of area churches created by Wesley Community Services (Wesley) to enable churches to better serve seniors in their congregation. The mission of Wesley’s parent company, Wesley Services Organization, is to promote the independence of seniors, enhancing their lives by providing essential services and support for their families and the community. CEO Stephanie Tunison noted, “Wesley Community Services lives out that mission by helping seniors live independently for as long as possible, through the provision of Meals-On-Wheels, specialized transportation, and home care services.”

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About Wesley Community Services: Wesley Community Services supports seniors seeking to remain in their home for as long as possible, through the provision of essential home-based services, including Meals-On-Wheels, specialized transportation, and home care, plus a Pet Portions program that gives clients free dog and cat food. More than 2,300 seniors and individuals with disabilities were served during 2010. Wesley Community Services is funded by the Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio and is a United Way partner agency. For more information about Wesley Community Services, call (513) 661-2777, or go to www.wesleycs.org. Wesley Services Organization is the parent entity of Wesley Community Services and Lincoln Crawford.

About the Hamilton County Coalition to Stop Fraud, Scams & Abuse: The Hamilton County Coalition to Stop Fraud, Scams & Abuse was established to help Hamilton County residents learn how to stop fraud and scams by: 1) identifying potential fraud or scams, 2) learning how to protect yourself, and 3) reporting an instance of fraud should you become a victim. Consumer fraud, identity theft, and scams are widespread crimes that affect millions every year. The current economic downturn has exacerbated the problem and created consumers that are more financially vulnerable than ever. The key to protect yourself from consumer fraud, identity theft and scams in our community is to educate yourself. To reach as much of the community as possible, the Coalition conducts outreach activities and works with other community organizations to educate residents of Hamilton County. For more information about the coalition call (513) 946-4405 or go to: <http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/fraud>. To report a scam, call the Better Business Bureau of Cincinnati at (513) 421-3015.



HAMILTON COUNTY COALITION to **STOP** FRAUD, SCAMS & ABUSE

