



For Immediate Release
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New Credit Counseling Office Targets College Students

(Cedar Falls, Iowa) Students at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls can keep their debt in check more easily than ever. Now they have expert credit counseling services available across from campus. Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Northeastern Iowa (CCCS of Northeastern Iowa) has opened an office in the Wesley Foundation at 2422 College Street.

“We think it’s important to serve college students who are flooded with credit card applications all the time,” said Karen Atwood, CEO of CCCS of Northeastern Iowa. “Students at the University of Northern Iowa have to manage their student loans and their credit card debt just like students everywhere. We want to help them get out of debt and stay out of debt before the issue affects them far into their adult lives.”

A 2004 Nellie Mae study on student credit card debt showed more than half of undergraduates carried balances of under \$1,000. Nellie Mae is a student finance firm. Atwood says she’s seen students get into major credit card debt trouble firsthand. “It always starts with little items. Like all of us, students find it easy to use their plastic for things they want but can’t necessarily afford. Pretty soon, the situation is out-of-control.”

CCCS of Northeastern Iowa chose to locate its credit counseling office for Cedar Falls in the Wesley Foundation for several reasons. It’s located conveniently across from campus on College Street. Also, the United Methodist Pastor who runs the ministry at the Wesley Foundation thought credit counseling fit perfectly into his goal of helping students. “This credit counseling service does not have a religious message,” Pastor Dave Glenn-Burns

said. “But we are a campus ministry and one of my concerns is how students handle their finances. It’s so easy for young adults to overspend.”

Pastor Glenn-Burns said he also hears how students feel they have to get high-paying jobs right out of college to be able to pay for the things they purchased on their credit cards. “They might make other job choices if they didn’t have to worry about how much they have on their credit cards,” he said.

Karen Atwood said CCCS of Northeastern Iowa is dedicated to financial literacy of young people starting in high school. The agency teaches a financial management course called *Credit When Credit is Due* in several Iowa high schools, including those in the Cedar Valley. “We think it’s important young people learn how to handle their finances. We can help everyone that way by helping students make good choices and avoid potential bankruptcy down the road,” she said.

CCCS of Northeastern Iowa has a counselor available at the Wesley Foundation once a week right now. The agency is also planning a series of workshops from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Foundation for students starting November 13th. The schedule includes:

November 13th – Handling the temptation of credit card applications

November 20th – Understanding the importance of a credit report

November 27th - Strategies for paying off credit cards *and* student loans.

For more information on CCCS of Northeastern Iowa, go to www.cccsia.org.

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