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**CITY OFFICIALS AND FRANK ABAGNALE KICK OFF THE CITY'S
FIRST-EVER 'SHRED FEST NYC' TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT
IDENTITY THEFT**

***50 Paper Shredders Donated by Staples Will Be Given Away at the Free
Paper Shredding Event on Sunday, April 27 at 11 Locations Citywide***

***Criminal Justice Coordinator Announces Effort to Secure Credit Card
Receipt Information***

Consumer Affairs Commissioner Jonathan Mintz, Criminal Justice Coordinator John Feinblatt, officials from the Departments of Parks & Recreation and Sanitation and Frank Abagnale, author of "*Stealing Your Life*" and subject of the motion picture "*Catch Me If You Can*", today kicked off Shred Fest NYC, the City's first-ever free shredding event, to increase public awareness of identity theft prevention. The event serves as a reminder to New Yorkers about the importance of shredding documents that contain personal identifying information before throwing them away. Every year, an estimated 14,000 New Yorkers become victims of identity theft, the fastest growing crime in the country. Document shredding is one of the most important ways New Yorkers can protect their identity. Shred Fest NYC will be held on Sunday, April 27, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at 11 locations throughout the five boroughs where New Yorkers can bring personal documents to be shredded. In addition to having their documents shredded by industrial shredding equipment, New Yorkers will receive information on how to prevent identify theft and have an opportunity to receive one of fifty Staples MailMate 3 paper shredders donated by Staples. All of the shredded paper generated by Shred Fest NYC will be recycled.

"Perhaps the single biggest surprise when it comes to protecting your identity is that you're in a terrific position to protect yourself," said Consumer Affairs Commissioner Jonathan Mintz. "The City's 11-site, 5-borough 'Shred Fest NYC' launches our public awareness campaign on identity theft protection, which will empower New Yorkers to take proactive steps to protect sensitive personal information."

"Having your identity stolen can turn your life upside down," said John Feinblatt, the Criminal Justice Coordinator. "The good news is consumers can take simple steps to safeguard their personal information and avoid becoming a victim. I encourage New Yorkers to clean those old files out of their closets and bring them to a Shred Fest NYC location so their documents can be safely destroyed and the paper recycled."

"Your private documents are better shred than read, so bring your personal documents to one of the 11 Shred Fest locations to be shredded and recycled – and enjoy your parks while you're at it," said Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe. "Public parks are accessible gathering places and we are pleased to

host Shred Fest NYC in many parks throughout New York City."

"Recycling all types of paper is a very good way to help manage our solid waste," said Sanitation Commissioner John J. Doherty. "Shredding valuable documents then recycling the residual paper is an excellent way to protect against identity theft. Hence, Sunday's Shred Fest NYC sounds like an absolute win-win for all New Yorkers and for the Mayor's innovative measures to 'green' our environment."

"Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in the United States, and with 70 percent of the American public having had some piece of personal data stolen, we have an epidemic on our hands," said Frank W. Abagnale, world-renowned expert on identity theft and fraud, and subject of Steven Spielberg's movie *"Catch Me if You Can."* "Many of the incidents of identity theft from individuals and businesses come from the most unexpected places and can be avoided with simple common sense. When you look at the time and financial costs incurred by ignoring these safeguarding behaviors, it is staggering."

New Yorkers can bring their documents containing personal information to be shredded, and securely disposed of, at the 11 Shred Fest locations throughout the City. New Yorkers are invited to bring boxes or bags of documents, mail or any paper materials, including bank statements, paycheck stubs or credit card applications to be shredded in trucks mounted with industrial shredding equipment provided pro bono by Code Shred, Brink's Document Destruction and USA Shred. The trucks are equipped with television monitors mounted on the sides of the trucks to allow for viewing of the shredded material. Stapled documents can be shredded, but documents bound with metal binder clips cannot be accepted.

Criminal Justice Coordinator John Feinblatt also announced that a recent examination of retailers' use of personal information on credit card receipts revealed that some merchants are not complying with the law. Federal and state law requires that electronically issued credit card receipts redact the credit card expiration date and all but the last five numbers of the credit card. The Mayor's Office has asked over 36 merchants to change practices that do not comply with the law, and over three-quarters of those merchants have already done so; the rest are in the process of complying with the law.

DCA recently announced that it issued violations against LifeLock, Inc. – the self-proclaimed "industry leader" in the identity theft protection industry. Its deceptive print and Web site advertisements can lead consumers to believe falsely that they are insured against any identity theft that takes place while they are enrolled with LifeLock.

New Yorkers can take their documents to the following locations to be shredded:

BRONX:

Lehman College (North Lot, Bedford Park Blvd. W. & Goulden Ave.)
Pelham Bay Park (Aileen B. Ryan Recreational Complex, Middletown Rd. & Watt Ave.)

BROOKLYN:

Brooklyn College (Avenue H. & Nostrand Ave.)
JJ Byrne Park (5th Ave. & 4th St.)

Highland Park (Vermont Pl., between Highland Blvd. & Jackie Robinson Pkwy.)

MANHATTAN:

Battery Park City (South End Ave. & W. Thames St.)

Central Park (Columbus Circle, 59th St. & Central Park W.)

St. Nicholas Park (135th St. & St. Nicholas Ave.)

QUEENS:

Queens County Civil Court (89th Ave. & Sutphin Blvd.)

Queens Community Board 2 Office / Rite Aid, (50-15 Roosevelt Ave., Woodside)

STATEN ISLAND:

Midland Beach Park (Father Capodanno Blvd. & Lincoln Ave.)

It's Your Identity...Protect It! Follow These Tips:

- **Shred first, trash last.** *Never* throw out papers with sensitive information, such as your Social Security Number.
- **Be careful when you receive suspicious telephone and e-mail offers.** *Never* give personal information over the phone and *never* click on unfamiliar e-mail links.
- **Safeguard your computer using antivirus and firewall software.**
- **Opt out of mail solicitations.** Register your address at www.optoutprescreen.com or call toll-free 1-888-567-8688.
- **Check your credit report for unusual activity.** Request your free annual credit report online at www.annualcreditreport.com or call 1-877-322-8228.

For more identity theft prevention tips or to find a Shred Fest NYC location near you, visit www.nyc.gov/consumers or call 311.

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) enforces the Consumer Protection Law and other related business laws throughout New York City. Ensuring a fair and vibrant marketplace for consumers and businesses alike, DCA licenses more than 60,000 businesses in 55 different categories. Through targeted outreach, partnerships with community and trade organizations, and informational materials, DCA educates consumers and businesses about their rights and responsibilities. For more information, call 311 or visit DCA online at www.nyc.gov/consumers.

The Criminal Justice Coordinator is the Mayor's chief policy advisor on criminal justice matters and is responsible for developing and implementing policies, legislation, and strategies in the fields of public safety and criminal justice. The Office of the Criminal Justice Coordinator also serves as a liaison to the City's prosecutors, the New York State Office of Court Administration, and state and federal criminal justice agencies. The Coordinator's Office works closely with the City's law enforcement agencies, including the Police, Correction, Probation, and Juvenile Justice Departments.