SFE&PD
SOCIETY FOR FINANCIAL EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Enhancing financial and professional growth...

500 Montgomery Street, Suite 400
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 920-3807 • (703) 647-6259 Fax
www.sfepd.org

financial $UCCESS

SUMMER 2017

Start Longevity Planning Now

Just because we are living longer doesn't mean we're going to remain healthy throughout our longer lives. While some credit goes to more active, health-conscious, smoke-free lifestyles, it's safe to say that today's seniors owe more to prescription drugs and medical advances for lengthening their lifespan.

And health care costs money — lots of it. In fact, Fidelity Investments found in its 2016 *Retiree Health Care Costs Estimate* study that a 65-year-old couple retiring last year with Medicare coverage will still need $260,000 to pay for medical expenses throughout retirement, excluding nursing-home care.

And with a longer life comes the greater likelihood of needing assisted-living or long-term care. According to the Genworth *2016 Cost of Care Survey*, assisted living averages $44,000 a year and nursing homes average more than $82,000 a year — per person.

Some of the things you can do to plan for a long life come down to repositioning your assets — as well as your approach toward life.

For example, lifestyle factors can contribute significantly to both how long you live and the quality of life you lead. Areas where most of us could easily pay more attention include lower caloric intake, higher vegetable and fruit consumption, a higher fiber diet, lower body fat, and regular exercise.

Furthermore, research has revealed that as you age, learning new skills can help protect the brain against age-related memory decline and dementia. This is particularly important during retirement when you no longer have the day-to-day cognitive challenges that kept your mind active. Effective brain-stimulating activities include doing crossword puzzles, playing

Continued on page 2

We Thank Our Partners and Sponsors for Their Support of the 10th Annual Financial Literacy Leadership Conference October 2–3, 2017

Start Longevity

Continued from page 1

video games, learning a new skill such as cooking or ballroom dancing, or learning a foreign language.

Studies have also found that people who feel the most socially connected are four times less likely to develop serious illnesses.

Finances

This is a good time to think about your priorities and align your assets to support your personal goals (not just your financial aspirations). In fact, you may need to reposition your assets to accommodate a longer life with fewer assets than you previously thought.

When we talk about reevaluating and establishing financial goals, it shouldn't just be about seeking a 10% average annual return on your investments over the next five years. You should consider what you actually want to do with your money. What is the purpose of it — to live out your life comfortably and secure, or to live in luxury, entertain, and travel extensively? The latter lifestyle may no longer be your priority, so before you determine what changes to make in your finances, it's important to establish what you want from your life.

Even in retirement, your portfolio may need to be positioned for both growth and security. Growth to meet the challenges of a long life and the impact of long-term inflation and health care, but also sources of secure income to ensure that your daily essential-living expenses will be met.

Insurance

During this continuing era of slow economic growth, remember that one of the key components to managing wealth is managing risk. In addition to the traditional sources of retirement and estate planning, consider today's popular insurance options, such as annuities, long-term care, and life insurance policies.

A Lifelong Plan

Life is long, and it's getting longer with each generation. They say that life gets in the way of even the best-laid plans, and it's true. Every plan — even a financial plan — requires tweaking and adjusting periodically to account for current events. However, your personal goals may well remain the same for the rest of your life. So if you establish the purpose of your money — what it is that you want out of life — then you can reposition your assets to help you reach those goals.

Please call your financial advisor if you'd like to discuss longevity planning in more detail. ❍❍❍

Saving Without Pain

Let's face it, many of us think saving is just plain old painful. And it can be if you completely deny yourself, but there are many ways that you can save money without feeling deprived. Following are some painless saving suggestions:

Direct deposit or automated savings — One of the easiest ways to save is to make it automatic. Set up a direct deposit from your paycheck to go directly to your savings or use online banking to set up an automatic transfer from your checking to your savings account on a regular basis.

Check your cell phone plan — As competition among cell phone carriers continues to escalate, this is a great opportunity to save on your cell phone bill. Compare your plan with other providers to see if you can get a similar plan for less money. If changing carriers is not an option, downsize your data plan with your current carrier.

Cut the cord on the landline — How often do you use your house phone? For many, it's just become an expensive answering machine.

Rethink cable — Check with your cable company to see if they offer smaller packages that can save you money.

Refinance debt — Refinancing your mortgage can significantly reduce your monthly expenses, but don't stop there. Check into refinancing your car, student loans, and credit card debt with zero-percent balance transfer cards. You may also want to look into banking with a credit union, which can provide significant savings in fees and interest.

Raise your insurance deductible — If you are able to pay more from your pocket when making an insurance claim, you can save a lot on your premiums. According to the Insurance Information Institute (January 2016), raising your deductible to $1,000 can save you 40% or more on comprehensive and collision premiums. You should also look into your homeowners insurance for similar savings.

Other ideas — Here are a few other easy ways to save:

- ✔ Pack your lunch instead of dining out.
- ✔ Become your own barista by making your own coffee.
- ✔ Make a shopping list and stick to it.
- ✔ Look for coupons for things on your list; don't be tempted to use them for things you don't need.
- ✔ Buy store brands, which are considerably cheaper.
- ✔ Take the time to comparison shop before making large purchases. ❍❍❍

Guarding Your Financial Information

An estimated 17.6 million Americans were victims of identity theft in 2014, with 86% experiencing the misuse of an existing credit card or bank account. Approximately 4% of victims had their personal information activity stolen to open a new account or other fraudulent activity (Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, September 2015).

Protecting your financial accounts and information is extremely important. Here are some steps to help you guard against becoming a victim:

Passwords and PINs

Create strong passwords that contain numbers, letters, and symbols, and don't share them or store them on your computer. If you need to write down your passwords and PINs, put them in a secure place. While it can be a hassle, you should change your passwords and PINs on a regular basis.

Keep Your Computer Secure

It is best to always use your own computer or device to access your financial accounts. Make sure your computer has up-to-date security software, including antivirus, antispam, and spyware detection that is configured for automatic updates.

Completely Log Out

After completing financial transactions, always click the log out button to terminate your session. Access to your account may not be terminated by closing your browser or entering a new web address.

Use Secure Wireless Connections

Only use secure wireless connections when accessing your financial accounts, as they provide much more security than unsecured Wi-Fi connections. Be cautious of using hotspots in public areas, like airports, hotels, and restaurants, because they often reduce their security settings to make it easier to access their wireless networks.

Protect Your Apps

If you access your financial accounts through an app on your mobile device, make sure you use the highest security setting that is available and your device is password protected.

Check for Secure Websites

Most financial institution sites are very secure; but when shopping online with your credit card, make sure the login page indicates that it is a secure site. The address of a secure website connection starts with https instead of just http and has a key or closed padlock in the status bar.

Never Respond to E-mails Requesting Personal Information

If you receive e-mails requesting personal information, such as your Social Security number, passwords, or PINs, do not respond to them. A legitimate company or financial institution would not ask you to provide or verify sensitive information through e-mail.

Review Your Statements

Make sure to review all of your monthly financial account statements to ensure all transactions are accurate.

Secure Your Documents

Find a safe location to maintain your financial documents. When disposing of any financial information, make sure you shred the documents before throwing them away.

Protect Your Social Security Number

You should keep your Social Security card in a secure place and not carry it with you. You should also never use your Social Security number as a username or password.

Check Your Credit Reports

By reviewing your credit report on a regular basis, you may be able to identify inaccuracies or unauthorized activity. You can obtain a free credit report every 12 months from the three different credit bureaus by visiting AnnualCreditReport.com. ❍❍❍

Which Goal Is More Important?

With limited resources for saving, which is the most important financial goal — saving for your retirement or saving for your children's college educations? While many parents want to pay the entire cost of their children's college educations, the reality is that there are a variety of ways to save for those educations — personal savings, financial aid, and loans.

Unfortunately, there aren't similar options for your retirement. No one is likely to loan you money if you haven't saved enough for retirement. You may want to maximize your retirement savings, realizing there are ways to use those savings to help with education costs. How can that strategy help when it comes time to send your children to college?

Your retirement savings won't be considered in financial aid formulas. The federal financial aid formula does not consider retirement accounts, including 401(k) plans and individual retirement accounts (IRAs), when calculating your expected family contribution. For other assets, the formula assumes that 5.6% of the parents' assets and 20% of the student's assets will be used annually for college costs. Thus, you may actually increase your financial aid award by saving in retirement accounts.

You can still use these retirement assets to help pay for college costs. Money in IRAs can be withdrawn to pay higher-education expenses before age 59½ without incurring the 10% federal income tax penalty, although taxes will be assessed on the taxable portion of the distribution. If the money is withdrawn from a Roth IRA, your contributions can be withdrawn at any time without penalty or taxes, while earnings can be withdrawn before age 59½ by paying income taxes but not the 10% tax penalty. With 401(k) plans, you typically can't withdraw the money before retirement age unless it is for a hardship withdrawal, but you can borrow funds if permitted by the plan. If you don't need the money to finance college costs, you can leave it in your retirement plans to continue to grow.

If you'd like to discuss the role your retirement accounts should have in financing your children's college educations, please call your financial advisor.

When Adult Children Return Home

Adult children return home to live for a variety of reasons — they can't find a job, they have too much debt, or they have divorced and need financial support. Use the situation to help reinforce basic financial concepts:

Set a time frame. Don't let your child move in for an open-ended time period. Financial goals should be set and followed, so your child is working toward financial independence.

Charge rent. There are increased costs when your child returns home — additional food, phone bills, utilities, etc. Although you don't have to charge a market rental rate, you should charge something. If you're uncomfortable taking money from your child, put the rent money aside in a separate account and use it to help your child when he/she moves out. Also decide which chores your child is expected to perform.

Put your agreement in writing. While putting everything in writing may seem too business-like, it gives you an opportunity to clearly spell out your expectations and the rules of the house. This can prevent future misunderstandings.

Financial Thoughts

The number of millionaires is expected to grow by 40% in the next five years (Source: *Journal of Financial Planning*, December 2016).

When asked how retirees spend their time, 67% of men connect with family, 52% socialize with friends, 42% volunteer, 38% participate in sports and outdoor activities, 28% work full- or part-time, and 15% take classes. For women, on the other hand, 80% connect with family, 75% socialize with friends, 58% volunteer, 18% participate in sports and outdoor activities, 19% work full- or part-time, and 30% take classes (Source: *Money*, November 2016).

Approximately 43% of married couples could not correctly identify how much their partner earns (Source: *Money*, November 2016).

When departing from a company, here's how many workers cash out their 401(k) plan, grouped by account size: 32% of those with balances of $5,000 to $10,000, 27% of those with $10,000 to $25,000, 20% of those with $25,000 to $50,000, 14% of those with $50,000 to $100,000, and 8% of those with $100,000 to $250,000 (Source: *Money*, October, 2016).