SPROUTING!

S.E.E.D. Planning Group Spring Update | May 2016

Greetings from your team at S.E.E.D. Planning Group, LLC!

Because there are some interesting changes—both in regulations as well as here in the office—we thought a newsletter would be the most efficient and succinct method of communicating with you. These missives will continue as needed to keep you informed of issues, changes, and ideas. If you have thoughts on useful articles for us to include, please let us know!

Introducing SAGE Tuition Rewards:

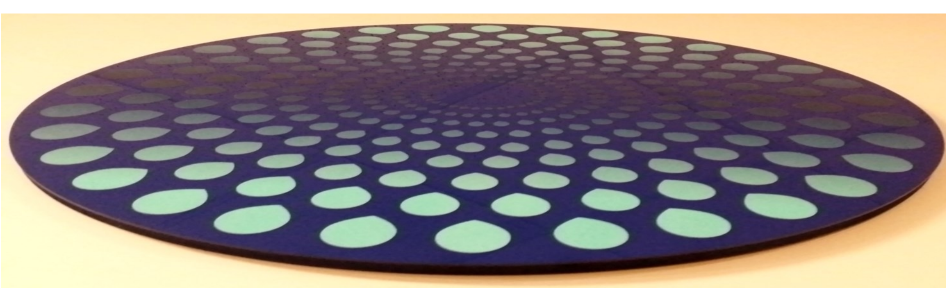
A New Way to Save for College

What if you could accrue rewards points and use them toward college tuition for your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews….?

S.E.E.D. Planning Group, LLC is proud to announce that we are partnering with just such a program! Established in 1997 to assist well-deserving students finance a private college education, SAGE Scholars, Inc. offers Tuition Rewards for undergraduate students. By investing through S.E.E.D., our clients now have the option to earn Rewards at a rate of 5% annually on the value of qualified accounts. As assets appreciate, so do the Tuition Rewards!

Currently there are over 350 participating private four-year colleges, and an average of 20 new institutions are added each year. Check out SAGE's website at: https://secure.tuitionrewards.com/

We are excited about this program, our affiliation with SAGE, and the opportunity to offer their program to our clients. Truly a ***SAGE*** idea!



"An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." - Benjamin Franklin

stimulating. **e**xceptional **e**thical. **d**uty.

In this Issue

We believe in educating our community. Visit our SEEDS OF WISDOM page at SEEGPG.com for articles & further information.

Socially-Responsible Investing

Understanding the Social Impact of your Investments

Socially-responsible investing has gained a lot of popularity in the past few years. According to the Forum for Sustainable and Responsible Investment, investment in socially-responsible funds grew 76% from the 2012 to 2014 accounting for 18% of total assets under management. This number continues to grow as more and more investors are drawn toward companies that have established, socially-responsible practices.

S.E.E.D. now offers a socially responsible investment portfolio. Our investment selection process investigates socially-responsible investments which are screened based on Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors. The ESG screening process channels investments toward companies who are making strides to have a positive impact while also discouraging investment in companies whose operations are harmful at any or all levels of ESG factors.

Contact us to learn more about how you can begin investing responsibly!

Health Insurance & Medicare Planning

S.E.E.D. Planning Group, LLC now offers a Health insurance Planning service. This service is a fee-based arrangement with a general assessment starting at $300 for an individual and $500 for a couple. Because S.E.E.D. Planning Group, LLC acts in your best interest as a fiduciary, our advisors do not make any commissions on this service. S.E.E.D. is not limited to using specific insurance programs, which means our advisors always offer advice that is in the best interest of our clients.

Did you know that S.E.E.D. Planning Group, LLC now also offers Medicare Planning in partnership with S.E.E.D. Financial Strategies, LLC? First-time Medicare recipients must sign up for Medicare by age 65 or face penalties. First-time enrollers are permitted to start the sign up process up to 90 days in advance of turning 65. Because understanding your options can be difficult and time consuming, we recommend taking full advantage of this 90 period. Insurance companies will pay a commission to an agent through a CMS-defined commission schedule, meaning that in most cases, there is no cost to have one of our advisors walk you through this process.

Have you already signed up for Medicare, but are confused or need to assess your options? We can help with that, too! Contact us for more information or to set up an appointment.

Joseph Conwell,

Financial Planner

Joe comes to S.E.E.D. Planning Group with 24 years of experience in the Financial Services Industry. He has a wealth of experience in risk management, asset management, and financial advice dating back to 1992.

Since 2000, Joe’s professional focus has been on financial planning, Medicare, and Social Security Planning.

In addition to providing investment and financial planning services to his clients, Joe will be an integral part of SEED’s financial planning team as he steps into the role of lead advisor for SEED’s Medicare and Health Insurance planning services.

Amy Michaels,
Financial Planner

Amy joined the S.E.E.D. team in the summer of 2014 as an intern and has recently transitioned into her newest role as a Financial Planner.

Throughout her time at SEED, Amy has taken an interest in planning topics ranging from college to Social Security planning. Most recently, Amy developed a Socially-Responsible Investing program that allows clients to align their investment portfolio with their beliefs and personal values.

Amy is an active participant in the community. She coaches a Special Olympics team and delivers Meals on Wheels.

The DOL and Your Retirement Money

The US Department of Labor (DOL) has finalized a rule which addresses conflicts of interest in retirement advice. Although we are still studying the details, we are pleased that the DOL has taken the initiative to create a fair and reasonable marketplace for retirement investors.

While we foresee this rule (commonly referred to as the Fiduciary Rule) having a dramatic impact on the investment and retirement advice industry, S.E.E.D. has been preparing for this inevitable situation over the past three years. We feel confident that S.E.E.D. is well positioned to comply and thrive under the Fiduciary Rule.

The Fiduciary Rule spells out that all financial advisors must act in their clients' best interest when giving retirement advice. This is no longer a moral or ethical requirement—it is now the law. Going forward, firms will need to avoid incentives that allow advisors to act in their own best interest rather than that of their clients. This is the fiduciary model that S.E.E.D. Planning Group, LLC already follows and as a firm, we see this as a competitive advantage over our peers.

What does this mean for investors? Clients with accounts at S.E.E.D. held at Charles Schwab or ASPIRE will see minimal (if any) changes! Potential clients who have advisors with other firms may find their current investment accounts prohibited and may be forced to change their accounts. Some may even find that their advisors may not be registered to offer fiduciary services or may be prohibited from selling their firm's proprietary investment products.

We anticipate that this Fiduciary Rule may lead to firm consolidations, advisor retirements, and possibly even some firms going out of business. With this outlook, S.E.E.D. is looking to expand its services, expertise, and scale. We feel that S.E.E.D. is uniquely positioned to benefit from this rule, and we hope to leverage this advantage to bring value to our clients.

Tax Planning

At S.E.E.D. we view tax planning as a key component of a unified financial planning process. Our goal is to provide access to expert tax advice as well as strategically coordinated tax planning with your financial plan, tax return preparation, and other tax planning services as needed. S.E.E.D. is offering these tax-related services and more. Specific CPAs from Davidson Fox & Company, LLP are available by appointment at S.E.E.D.'s downtown Binghamton offices.

If you are looking for a new CPA or tax professional, would like your taxes coordinated with your financial plan, or would prefer the convenience of having your tax planning and financial planning done through one centralized location, this program is for you. Call us for more information!

Save the Date — SEED Picnic

Please join us for our annual picnic and golf tournament!

Sunday, August 14, 2016

Chenango Valley State Park

S.E.E.D. is growing because of you… for you!

Contact Us

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