

Secure Planning Strategies: Helping you chart a course towards financial freedom.

EN Navigator



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Special “Transitions” Issue
Spring/Summer 2014

Spring/Summer 2014

SPS Navigator

Welcome to our spring-summer edition of SPS Navigator. We hope you have transitioned well into our beautiful Michigan spring after a brutal and extensive winter. Seasonal changes are something we all have learned to deal with; however, we may not always be prepared to accept the series of frequent changes in our lives. Some changes are welcomed while others may result in inconvenient to catastrophic situations. There is a difference between change and transition. Change is mostly situational and transition is often psychological. Some transitions may also involve major disruptions in our routines which forces us to adapt to a different life style and to re-examine our values.

As your wealth advisors we have seen you go through various life changes and transitions. They may be voluntary transitions, like moving into a new home, children going to college or getting married, resulting in parents becoming empty nesters. They may be predictable, such as retirement or unpredictable such as death or disability. Some of these transitions involve a lot of pre and post planning. They involve emotions, finances, communication, and acceptance of a new reality. Most transitions are difficult initially, even when they are positive. It is always a work in progress until the change becomes the new way of life.

We hope you find the three articles, which includes an interview concerning transitions, informative. For fun, we have also included a list of career transitions of some well-known people.

We'd also like to draw your attention to our newly-transitioned website – when you have a free moment, take a look! You will notice we made quite a few updates in both the look and navigation in an effort to improve functionality and ease of use. *We welcome your comments and wish you all a wonderful summer.*



Minoti Rajput, CFP®



Mehul Mistry, CFP®



Elinor Ho, ChFC®

Parents with Adult Special Needs Children: *The Art of Letting Go*



Special needs adults are a primary concern for their aging parents. As parents of these adult children age, they are faced with the reality that their special needs children may outlive them. Further, they must consider the impact their retirement, disability, or death may have on their children. According to the U.S. Census, 20 percent of adults under the age of 65 have special needs; and, a 2012 MetLife survey reports that nearly 70 percent of the families of these special needs adults say they are worried about their children's future.

Moving Out and Moving On

Like any parents, parents of special needs children are protective of them and even though caring for them takes an emotional and physical toll, they feel they are the best caregivers for them. While they probably *are* the best caretakers for their special needs children, they must accept the fact that their children need to learn to live away from them. This represents both an emotional, financial, and logistical challenge they must overcome.

The SPS team is dedicated to the special needs population and is proactive in motivating parents to make decisions on the transition for their adult special needs children. Our clients, Mr. and Mrs. Russ (Betty) Reynolds represent one such example. We recently had the opportunity to chat with the Reynolds

about their experience with finding appropriate housing for their adult special needs boys, and gained valuable insight into the process as we discussed the many challenges and concerns they had and how they overcame them.

SPS: Thank you for taking the time to talk with me. Tell us a little about both David and Darren.

RR: David is now 47 years old. His early childhood development was slow. He didn't walk until age 2 and began talking very late as well. And even though his small motor skills also lagged behind, the pediatrician didn't think he would have any trouble in school. We kept telling the doctor that something was wrong, but he just wouldn't listen. David lasted one day in kindergarten. The school called and suggested we

enroll him in the public school special education program, so that's what we did. He did very well in that program and had some truly fantastic teachers in high school. He attended all four years and received a certificate of completion. He and his brother both became quite involved in the Special Olympics as well.

He got life skills training through a program called Visions Unlimited. There he learned things he needed to find employment. They helped him get a job as a packer for Kroger. In fact, he's worked at Kroger for 23 years now and is probably the most senior packer in the state of Michigan.

Both boys are high functioning and can take care of their own basic needs like dressing themselves, feeding themselves – things like that. They don't drive, don't read well and David is kind of a loner, but they do very well.

BR: Darren is six years younger than David. He'll be 41 this year. When he was born, he looked perfectly normal. He was a little delayed, but not too much. He walked at 16 months, but his speech is still limited. It's always been easy to make Darren happy. He did well in elementary special education, but after about six years, they downgraded him to what's known as "trainable". He also got job and life skills training through Visions Unlimited and worked at Target for nine years. He lost that job because he couldn't defend himself when other employees accused him of doing something wrong. But, he's been working at Home Depot for eight or nine years now, and loves it there. He's classified as a "loader", but he really functions as a cart attendant. You know, bringing the carts in and out of the parking lot. He also helps load materials in customers' cars and things like that.

SPS: What were your thoughts on their long term planning? Did you have concerns about who would take care of them after you were no longer here?

RR: That's always been a concern of ours. We visited a couple of group homes, but the boys are too high functioning for those environments. It just so

happened that the director of an organization called Supportive Alternative Living knew the boys because of their involvement in the Special Olympics. She happened to be David and Darren's soccer and basketball coach.

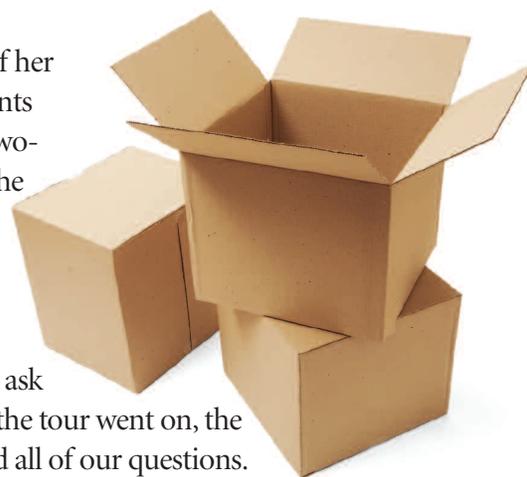
BR: When one of her special needs clients moved out of a two-bedroom place, she called us. Russ [Mr. Reynolds] had a whole lot of questions, but

never even got to ask them because as the tour went on, the director answered all of our questions.

We couldn't ask for a better place for the boys. Every night they get 4 hours of help from staff. The staff member cooks for them, drives them places, and generally does things for them that they can't do themselves. Another great thing about it is that their housing is a duplex unit and two girls they've known all through school live in the other side of the duplex.

RR: We had a pizza party to celebrate their new home and invited the neighbor girls over too. Later the boys went to watch television at the girls' home. The director was planning to stay on the sofa that night to make sure they adjusted well, but they were fine and she didn't need to. They were so comfortable and happy that when the morning staff member came to check on them, they were already dressed and ready for work.

BR: We might not have found this wonderful place for the boys had they not been involved in Special Olympics and known the director. We advise any parents of special needs children to get involved in the kids' activities and get to know other parents. That way you build your network over the years and it's easier to make these transitions when you have that.



SPS: What were your fears about moving them away from home? How about their fears?

BR: Actually, it took very little time – really no time at all – for them to get acclimated. It was a relief because we knew they were in a good place and we can visit them whenever we like. I remember one place we visited, when we were still looking, and it was so dark inside the boys wouldn't even take their coats off. I would have never wanted them to stay in a dismal place like that. The duplex is bright and cheerful and it gives us peace of mind knowing that they're taken care of so well.

We now know that their brother, Richard, won't have to worry about caring for the boys after we're gone. He's married and has a life of his own. We didn't want to disrupt that by not having everything in place beforehand.

SPS: Are the boys still handling the change and everything well? How about you?

RR: David gets five weeks of vacation from Kroger and he's in a new apartment and living separately from Darren. While living together in the duplex, the boys would rough house and wrestle, making lots of noise. The neighbors and staff thought they were fighting and worried that someone would get hurt. Darren still lives in the duplex, but David moved to the new apartment. With all that time off he was lonely and bored, so we took him to lunch and try to do some additional things with him while he has all this extra time. Both boys came home for my 80th birthday party.

BR: We do hope that after some time apart, they can move back in together again. We are concerned that if one of them takes a walk down the street to get a soda or something, no one is around to notice if he doesn't come back. It's harder on them financially to live apart because they're having to handle full utilities, rent, and other costs, whereas before they split the expenses.

SPS: How does your other son, Richard, feel about the boys living away from home?

RR: Richard is pleased that his brothers are doing so well. He visits them and stays in touch with them on a regular basis. One thing he mentioned to us is that now Betty [Mrs. Reynolds] and I have time to ourselves that we didn't have before. That's been great for us. We don't really have guilt because we figure it's a transition all parents go through – children leaving home. It's just that most parents' children leave and build lives of their own much earlier than adults with special needs do.

SPS: How are the boys doing now? What advice do you have to share with other parents of adult children with special needs?

BR: They're doing great and we are so happy because we feel as if the staff there loves them almost as much as we do. You can't ask for a better situation. We regularly visit with a gal that the boys grew up with. We have kind of a standing date with her every Tuesday morning. We meet her for bagels, and then she comes over and plays *Skip Bo* and other games with me. She's higher functioning, so she can drive herself. Staying involved in the special needs community is important.

RR: We're very involved in the boys' lives and activities and regularly communicate with other parents. Depending on your child's specific situation, begin visiting group and independent living homes early. Talk to other parents and find out what places they've toured and investigated for their own children.

Seeing a special needs child move away from the family home represents a huge transition and an adjustment for both the child and the parents; yet, it is also a huge relief. While finding the best situation and making the necessary arrangements may seem almost insurmountable, it doesn't have to be. The SPS team stands ready to help support parents with special needs adult children throughout the process. ■





Transition to Joy

How Life Planning Makes it Possible

One of the most important milestones for any individual is the transition from full-time work to retirement. As a growing number of baby boomers approach retirement, proper planning for this transition becomes critical. Some look forward to life's second act after retirement and have – at the very least – developed a mental vision of what they want it to look like. Some may dread this stage of life and avoid thinking about it, leaving them clueless as to what it holds for them. Still others may find themselves forced into retirement for some reason.

Regardless of your feelings about retirement, the day will certainly come. Whether you're retiring from a fulfilling and long-term corporate career, or exiting a business you started, this transition evokes an array of emotions. As retirement gets closer, you may have feelings of uncertainty, powerlessness, and ambiguity. Eliminate these uncomfortable emotions with a lifestyle plan that includes, but reaches beyond, developing and implementing a solid financial plan.

Retirement – Time to Crack the Egg

Fulfillment and happiness require deliberate and mindful nurturing no matter your stage of life and retirement is no different. But transitioning into retirement happiness takes careful planning and a commitment to implement the plan faithfully. Your plan should incorporate both financial and non-financial aspects of your post-retirement life:

- 1. Comprehensive financial plan.** Happiness in your second act requires more than just a healthy retirement income. Even so, financial hardship contributes to retirement stress, casting a negative light on daily life in general. A comprehensive financial plan will allow you to manage your life in a fulfilling way using the financial resources you already have in place. It's important that you have a clear understanding of your income and the impact your lifestyle, now and in the future, will have on your nest egg. Consider developing a budget that outlines how you'll use the income received from various sources. The budget should include some spending boundaries that you can review weekly or monthly to make sure you don't spend too much or limit yourself with unnecessary frugality.

2. Good health habits. While working, many people feel they don't have the time for a regular fitness routine. They often have family responsibilities and long work hours and can't seem to commit to take care of their health the way they should. Retirement gives you more time to take deliberate steps that maintain good health. Take an exercise class, join a yoga group, play tennis, go for daily walks or jogs. Don't forget to exercise your brain everyday too. Things like crossword puzzles, Sudoku, or board games like chess and Scrabble keep your brain active and alert. Recharge both body and brain by eating healthy meals and snacks. And, of course, schedule regular checkups with your physician and comply with all medication schedules and medical advice.

3. Supportive friends and family. Many friendships and social outings revolve around a person's career. You may find it challenging to maintain these friendships when you don't see them in a daily office setting, especially if they're still working. One way is to set aside a day each week to meet your former co-workers for lunch. Prior to retirement, consider getting involved in your community or some sort of group activity. This gives you the opportunity to meet people and develop friendships outside of your work environment. Put forth the effort to maintain

family relationships. Reach out and reconnect with family members you've lost touch with over the years.

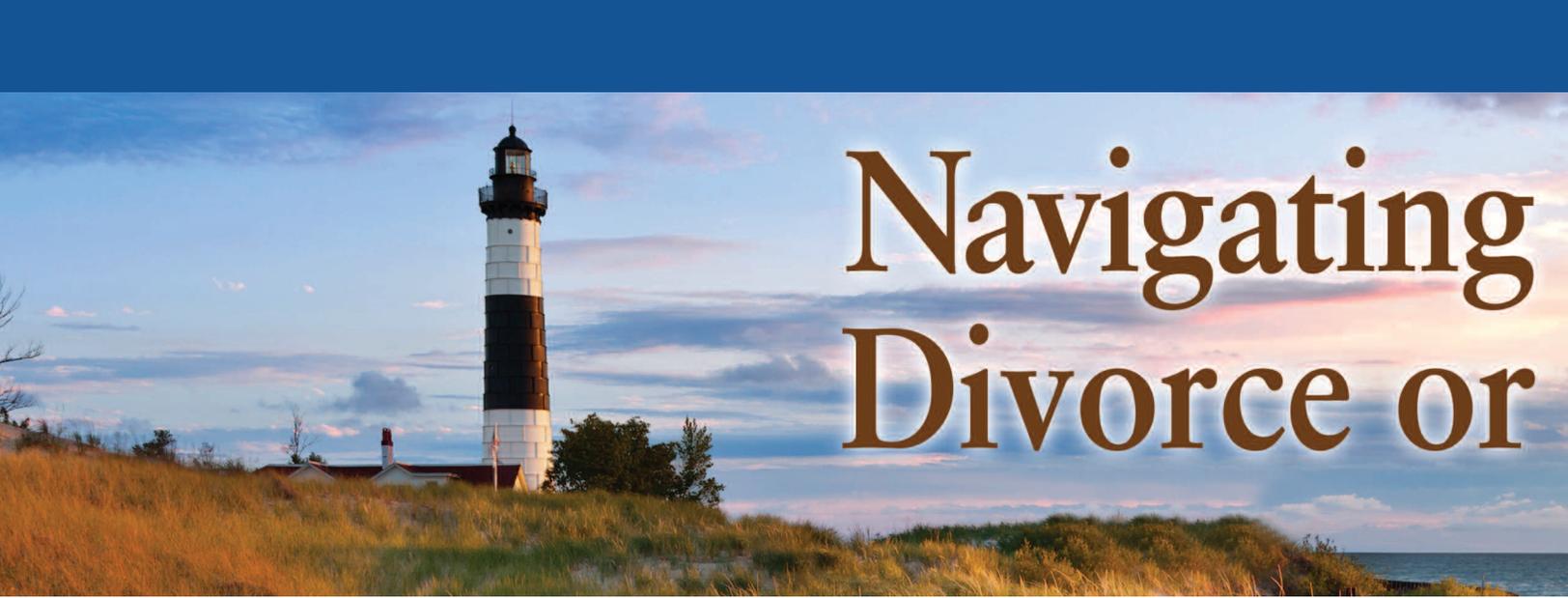
4. Daily activity or projects. Don't waste your retirement years in front of a television or computer. Come up with a list of hobbies and projects that interest you. Perhaps you always wanted to build custom furniture or learn decorative painting, but never had the time. Retirement gives you the freedom to pursue these activities in earnest. Some people continue in their career fields in some part-time capacity. They may provide consulting services or mentor younger people in their field of expertise. Others start post-retirement businesses. Decide how you will use your talents and knowledge on a daily basis before you actually retire.

5. Understanding spouse. Couples should understand the impact retirement could have on their daily home lives and relationship. They should discuss things like the division of household responsibilities and how much time to spend together each day. Whether only one person worked, or both of them did, the sudden 24/7 togetherness retirement brings can put stress on the relationship. Schedule some time apart, preferably out of the house, each day, even if it's only an hour or two.

6. Travel and leisure. Some couples envision taking an annual trip abroad, or spending three months in a beachside vacation home each year. Others take their leisure time in small weekly doses at the golf course on Saturdays, or two weekends a month visiting the grandkids in the city. How do you define fun? Include this in your retirement life plan too. That way, you and your advisor can include your annual trip to France or golf club membership dues in your budget.



Retirement creates a void. A retirement life plan fills it and gives you control over your destiny and your legacy. ■

A photograph of a lighthouse on a grassy hill at sunset. The lighthouse is white with a black top section. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, and the ocean is visible in the distance.

Navigating Divorce or

Losing a spouse, whether through death or divorce, can be one of the most devastating events you'll ever face. The onslaught of intense emotions surrounding your loss may mark the beginning of a long and painful time of transition. Some of the most common emotions include sadness, anger, loneliness, and fear of the unknown. It's not easy to learn how to handle your lifestyle, and all that goes along with it, by yourself.

Both men and women experience daunting challenges when making the transition from married to single. But women, especially, often find themselves confused and fearful when it comes to financial matters after divorce or death of a spouse. Even in our modern world, many marriages involve traditional gender roles where the wife manages the home and needs of the children and the husband handles the finances. Women frequently find themselves starting from a handicapped point of view when it comes to understanding their finances as well as coping with grief and other emotions.

Navigating the Transitional Waters After Death or Divorce

No one is ever emotionally or financially prepared for divorce or the loss of a spouse. Frequently, divorce procedures end up costing much more than either partner imagined from both a financial and emotional standpoint. When it comes to the death of a partner, the financial transition may come a bit easier for those who have taken steps to discuss the practicalities surrounding the death of one partner.

Even if you've taken the time to sit down with an advisor to plan for and deal with financial matters, grief may still make it difficult to make sound financial decisions.

In addition to managing the array of other emotions associated with the death of a spouse or divorce, you're dealing with monumental life changes and are faced with a daunting list of unfamiliar monetary and lifestyle choices. The following steps may help alleviate some stress and anxiety, so you can begin to adjust to your new situation:

- **Build a strong support network.** Regardless of whether your loss is due to death or divorce, it's a good idea to build a strong personal and professional support network. People in your support network can help you work through your emotions and think through legal and financial considerations arising out of your new situation. Your support network may include: close friends, family members, attorney, accountant, physician, financial advisor, and other trusted professionals. Having this network in place will reduce overwhelming feelings and add some stability as you build your new life.
- **Slow down and avoid making significant decisions under duress too soon.** Avoid quick decisions about selling real estate or anything else that may have a large financial impact on your portfolio structure. Instead, sit down with your trusted advisors and discuss steps necessary to preserve your wealth and provide for your needs now and in the future.

Life After Loss of a Spouse

- **Create a new financial plan.** Now that you've had an initial discussion with your advisor about your financial situation, it's time to create a new financial plan. Even if you and your spouse had a joint financial plan, things have changed. You'll need to make numerous adjustments that reflect your current life situation. You and your advisor should discuss the following:
 - Asset allocation plan
 - Tax-wise investment strategies
 - Updating wills and living trusts
 - Updating life, health, home and auto insurance
 - New retirement plan
- **Set yourself up for success.** Lean on your personal support network by asking them to help you avoid falling into a pattern of negative thinking. Talk to others who have lost a spouse or been through a divorce. Sharing similar personal experiences can go a long way toward giving you a sense of belonging and peace of mind. Try to look to the future with a positive attitude, understanding that while it takes time, you will eventually heal and find a new comfort zone within your daily life. In other words, as time goes by, you must learn to live again, establish balance in your life, and – perhaps most of all – learn to smell the roses again.

An experienced wealth advisor will help you create and fully understand your financial plan. Not only that, he or she will help you properly implement your plan.

- **Set up regular meetings with your financial advisor.** If you're newly widowed or divorced, you may find yourself far outside of your comfort zone when it comes to investing or withdrawing needed funds. Meet with your advisor regularly so you can reassess your situation and make any necessary adjustments to your life plan.
- **Develop a new home budget.** Even if you have never needed a budget before, you will need one now. It's important to know how much you spend on monthly fixed expenses like housing, food, utilities, and gasoline. This understanding of how much fixed monthly income you need is critical before making any discretionary purchases.

Whether you're coping with the aftermath of death or divorce, it's critical that you rebuild your financial stability and plan for future needs. Certainly, money cannot heal a broken heart, but as a suddenly single adult, you must take notice of your financial situation, get expert advice, and avoid making any major financial decisions at first. This is one step along the path to smelling those roses again and living a full life. Your trusted wealth advisor can help educate you and guide you so that you have confidence in your finances and feel in control of your life. ■



THEY DID WHAT?

On the lighter side... Here are some celebrities who made amazing job transitions. Can you guess what they used to do before they become famous? Draw a line to connect the pairs. Bet you can't guess them all!

1. BRAD PITT

2. ROD STEWART

3. JULIA CHILD

4. WALT DISNEY

5. CHRISTOPHER WALKEN

6. CORY MONTEITH

7. AUTHOR, J.D. SALINGER

8. SEAN CONNERY

9. GEORGE WASHINGTON

10. WHOOP! GOLDBERG

11. HARRISON FORD

12. RAY ROMANO

13. DANNY DEVITO

14. AUTHOR, STEVEN KING

15. MATTHEW MCCONAUGHEY

16. OPERA SINGER ANDREA BOCELLI

17. DWIGHT D EISENHOWER

18. RONALD REAGAN

19. AUTHOR, KURT VONNEGUT

20. RON PAUL

DID MAKEUP ON CORPSES AT MORTUARIES

NEWSPAPER EDITOR – FIRED FOR LACK OF IMAGINATION

CLEANED CHICKEN COOPS

A GRAVEDIGGER

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

WALMART GREETER

LIFEGUARD – SAVED 77 LIVES IN A 7 YEAR CAREER

SPY FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT

LAND SURVEYOR

A LION TAMER FOR THE CIRCUS

JANITOR

MANAGER FIRST SAAB DEALERSHIP IN U.S

HAIRDRESSER

MILKMAN

CARPENTER

WORE CHICKEN SUIT PROMOTING FAST FOOD RESTAURANT

ENTERTAINMENT DIRECTOR – SWEDISH LUXURY LINER

DOCTOR – SPECIALIZED IN DELIVERING BABIES

SUPERVISOR AT A CREAMERY

BANK TELLER

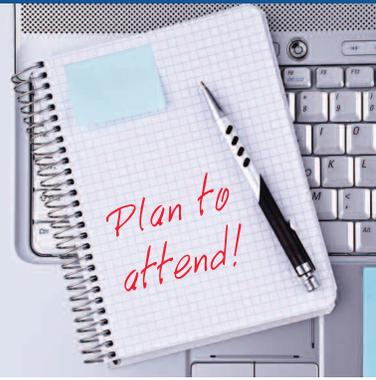


1. Chicken Suit. 2. Gravedigger. 3. Spy for Government. 4. Newspaper editor. 5. Lion tamer. 6. Walmart greeter. 7. Entertainment Dir. 8. Milkman. 9. Land surveyor. 10. Makeup on Corpses. 11. Carpenter. 12. bank teller. 13. Hairdresser. 14. Janitor. 15. Cleaned chicken coops. 16. Defense attorney. 17. Creamery supervisor. 18. Lifeguard. 19. Manager at SAAB dealership. 20. Doctor.



UPCOMING Educational Workshops

from Secure Planning Strategies



Spring/Summer 2014 Schedule

“Retirement Planning Today”

Educational Course for Adults – 50-70

Presented By Minoti Rajput & Mehul Mistry

Hands on Educational Course that delivers comprehensive, objective knowledge that will guide you as you prepare for your retirement.

Learn how to:

- Avoid 10 of the biggest retirement planning mistakes.
- Determine your Retirement Needs & Expenses; Determine your income sources & distribution plan.
- Invest for retirement needs; Protect your assets; Determine Life Planning and Estate Planning Needs.

This course is also a great way to introduce your friends to SPS’s resources and planners.

Choose from the following dates and locations:

Eastern Michigan University – Livonia Center

– or – Sept. 30 & Oct. 7: Tuesday 6:30 - 9:30 pm
October 4 & 11: Saturday 9:00 am to Noon

Walsh College – Troy Campus

October 21 & 28: Tuesday 6:30 - 9:30 pm

Oakland University – Rochester

October 23 & 30: Thursday 6:30 - 9:30 pm

“Savvy Social Security & Medicare Planning”

Presented By Minoti Rajput & Elinor Ho

What Baby Boomers need to know to maximize retirement income and benefits.

Secure Planning Strategies Office
June 30: Monday 5:00 - 7:00 pm

“Special Needs Workshops”

Presented By Minoti Rajput & Mehul Mistry

Topic: Important Updates on Special Needs Planning

Bloomfield Township Public Library

September 16: Tuesday 6:30-8:30 pm

Topic: Life Planning and Creating a Letter of Intent for a Child with Special Needs

Friendship Circle – West Bloomfield Township

November 3: Monday 7:00-8:30 pm

Cooke School Special Education – Northville

November 12: Monday 6:00-8:00 pm

“Strategies in Tax Planning”

Presented By Minoti Rajput & Elinor Ho

Choose one of the following dates:

Secure Planning Strategies Office

September 15: Monday 5:00 - 7:00 pm

October 20: Monday 5:00 - 7:00 pm

November 17: Monday 5:00 - 7:00 pm

Additional Schedules are being worked on. Please check our website (www.spsfinancial.com) for updates and times of upcoming workshops including Special Needs Planning!

**Registration is limited -
CALL TODAY to reserve your seat!
248-827-2580**

Secure Planning Strategies



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THANK YOU

We appreciate you choosing us to help chart a course for your financial freedom. Together, we will strive for the smoothest sailing. We are committed to guiding you to your destination through proper planning and ongoing advice. We thank you for your support, your trust and for referring your friends and family to us. The growth of our firm and the recognition we have received could not have been possible without your help.

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