

HILLSBOROUGH BEACON



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One dollar

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With a growing population nearing, or past, the age of retirement in Hillsborough, a new franchise is looking to ensure that residents have the money to take them into the future, despite the current state of the country's economy.

American Prosperity Group (APG), with headquarters in Wayne, opened its first Hillsborough franchise, in the Triangle Center on Route 206, in April 2008 in response to a growing demographic in the township, and the state in general, that uses the type of assistance the company provides.

"We are retirement and estate planning specialists," said Mark Charnet, CEO and founder of the company that began in 2003. "We are maximizing income for today while preserving and protecting wealth for tomorrow."

The group is planning a series of workshops in Hillsborough to address some of these concerns, including long-term care insurance (Jan. 19), estate planning (Jan. 20) and annuities (Jan. 21). The workshops will be held at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. at 284 US Route 206, Building D, in Hillsborough. Pre-registration is necessary to attend the workshops — call 908-904-4100 or e-mail: register.lynch@1APG.com.

Most of the company's clients, Mr. Charnet said, are in the 50- to 90-year-old range, a group that is well represented in Hillsborough.

APG offers a service designed to create and implement a plan through what Mr. Charnet calls the "Trinity Method of Investing," a practice trademarked by his company. The method, he said, looks to protect portfolios from risks of liability lawsuits, costs of health care, costs of long-term care and market losses.

At the same time, Mr. Charnet said, his method looks to create five different benefits, namely income for life, safety of principle, growth of capital, tax advantages and liquidity.

But the strategy to go about implementing the method, Mr. Charnet said, is tailor-made for individual clients, who are not charged for consultations with APG professionals. Once they have a strategy implemented, the companies chosen to manage a client's portfolio compensate APG.

"The client is in the driver's seat," he said. "The strategy is tailor-made to each person, and we give them veto power."

Hillsborough franchisee Kevin Lynch said he is working through community and seniors groups to arrange informational workshops. "There is a very large senior group here in Hillsborough," Mr. Lynch said. "This is an educational session that everyone could benefit from."

Mr. Charnet said there are 14 franchisees in seven different states — New Jersey, North Carolina, Maryland, Kentucky, New Mexico, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

"We don't need millions of clients," he said. "We are looking to build relationships. We look at ourselves as being financial friends on retainer."

Those relationships, Mr. Lynch said, create the trust between himself and the clients, who often come to him for other financial advice, including one instance in which someone asked him for financial help when trying to buy a new car.

"The Hillsborough community is a very tight community," he said. "We often have multigenerational clients where parents bring their kids for advice."

The current economy, Mr. Charnet said, should not have an effect on residents' desires to get involved with APG,

namely because the services themselves are free and the company is designed to help people manage their money for the future.

"The industry of advertising has been greatly affected because people are frightened to talk about money, and more people are hoarding it," he said. "I find that disappointing because, regardless of this, people need to be concerned about their portfolios. The economy should not have an impact on it because you have to focus on it in good or bad situations."

Mr. Charnet said the company offers its clients methods for dealing with a good and a bad economy, as well as how to maximize funds for the future.

"We are extending an olive branch," he said.

Overall, Mr. Charnet said, the company is designed to help people manage their money for the future and prepare for retirement with the funds to care for themselves and their families.

"We follow the six P's of, 'prior planning prevents poor performance period,'" he said. "We are implementing a method to protect."

For more information on APG, visit the Web site at 1apg.com. To contact the Hillsborough franchise, call Mr. Lynch at 908-904-4100, or visit his Web site at kevinlynch1apg.com.