

**YOURS, MUTUALLY**

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This column has treated specific investment products which are of interest and benefit to the private investor. They have been either fixed income or equity in nature.

For those uncomfortable or timid about direct investing, there is an investment vehicle which permits the investor to participate in either fixed income or equity investments without direct lending or ownership. This, of course, is the very popular mutual funds. In his excellent book on financial planning, "Financial Pursuite", the author Graydon G. Watters defines a mutual fund as follows:

"A pooled group of investment assets that provides diversified holdings and professional management to investors. The total value of the investment is subdivided in equal shares and distributed among fund holders in proportion to their dollar investment. An open-ended investment company combines the money of many people whose investment goals are similar and invests this money in a wide variety of securities."

There are many financial companies that offer mutual funds direct sales basis or through licenced agents. Some companies offer close to twenty different funds to the investing public. There are over 600 funds to chose from.

What type of fund does one invest in? Typically, a personal investment objective seeks a return on investment dollars in the form of income and/or growth. It will be of no surprise that mutual funds cater to those needs.

Basically, funds are offered as income funds (look for funds termed as dividend, money market, T-Bill, bond, mortgage) or equity funds (look for terms like growth, equity). An individual seeking a combination of income and capital growth will find funds called balanced funds as candidates.

Funds have been developed for investors who require specialization or international exposure. Examples would include funds termed as global, currency, real estate, strip bond, and precious metals.

Some argue that mutual fund investments buy professional management, diversification, minimum administration, automatic reinvestment of dividends, regular purchase facilities and income withdrawal plans.

Mutual funds are touted as practical vehicles for a dollar cost averaging



program. That is the regular investment of an equal sum of dollars in a mutual fund's units. As such, one buys more units when markets are low; less units when markets are high. This can be a powerful investment lever over an extended period of time. There is much more to mutual funds. Considerations of RRSP/RRIF eligibility, fund size, acquisition and redemption costs, administrative efficiency, expense ratios come into play. You will want an idea of the track record of the fund's manager and the fund's performance. As mutual funds grow in number some contend that selecting a suitable fund for your portfolio is as challenging as selecting the appropriate stock or bond.

A competent Financial Advisor can be your guide to your mutual fund investments.

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I'm free of all prejudices. I hate everyone equally.  
W. C. FIELDS



**PARENTING GROUPS**

The challenge of parenting is a full-time job. Parenting groups are set up for mothers and fathers to learn new parenting skills and to gain support. Family Focus and the Public Health Unit are working together to offer a parenting group in Westport and Elgin. A parenting group will begin in Portland soon also. If you are interested in a parenting group in your own community or you would like more information about or would like to sign up for one of the parenting groups contact Family Focus at 359-1069.

**WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM**

Family Focus is offering a new program to the community. There is now a Women's Employment Counsellor who can give women on social assistance (GWA, FBA) opportunities to find meaningful employment, up-grade their education, or learn new skills. For more information please contact Family Focus 359-1069.

**LOCAL PEOPLE SHOW GENEROSITY**

Local organizations and families shared their warmth and kindness over the holiday season. Donations of gifts were given by BETA SIGMA PHI of Westport and Elgin. In addition, the staff and management of NORTH LEEDS TRANSIT gave \$500 toward gifts to young children who attend one of our programs. Local families also gave donations. Their generosity is much appreciated.

Individual, couple and family counselling, in-home support, volunteer, information and referral services are some of the other services available to the community of North Leeds at Family Focus.

**COMMUNITY PLAYGROUPS**

The challenge of playing with a new toy would surely cheer up any child on a winter day.

Somewhere in North Leeds every Tuesday afternoon, Wednesday morning, Thursday morning and Thursday afternoon playgroups are set up for mothers, fathers, caregivers, grandparents to bring preschoolers. At these groups, preschoolers can play with many wonderful toys and adults can social with other community members. There is also the opportunity to discuss child rearing practices or concerns with others in the group or with a staff person. On some occasions toys and books can be borrowed.

Currently you can "drop-in" any time at one or all of the following locations:  
Tuesday afternoons: Newboro  
Wednesday mornings: Family Focus, Elgin  
Thursday afternoons: Seeley's Bay  
Thurs morning(1st & 3rd of month): Delta  
Thurs afternoon (2nd & 4th of month):Portland  
If you are interested in starting one in your area or would like information on the play groups contact Family Focus at 359-1069. The play groups are part of the Child Care Resource Program at Family Focus.

**TOY LENDING LIBRARY**

The mobile toy lending library is in different communities once per month:

Westport	1st Thursday	10 to 12
Toledo	3rd Tuesday	10 to 12
Delta	3rd Thursday	10 to 12

Borrowing the toys can give families an opportunity to try out a toy before purchasing it. We have a wide selection of safe and sturdy toys for families and caregivers to use in their homes. We have puzzles, games, building toys, musical instruments and toys and some larger items. Please feel free to come in and look around and play. They toy library is part of the Child Care Resource Program at Family Focus. For information contact us at 1-800-267-4406 or 359-1069.