



**For Immediate Release
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Youth 360: wreckED at Glen Cove High School
Glen Cove Students Explore the Power of Their Own Decisions

In today's world, teens are faced with some tough decisions every day. Some of these decisions may be about substance abuse. Many factors affect these decisions, including friends, family, and even stress.

What kind of decisions are Glen Cove teens facing about drug and alcohol use? According to the Bach-Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment administered to Glen Cove teens in January 2010, the rates for underage use of alcohol are above national norms, with 25% of students reporting taking part in binge drinking. Students reported a lower perception of risk for alcohol use along with a perception that "everyone is doing it", which may lead to internal pressure to be like "everyone" and use alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs. Most high school Seniors report that it is very easy for them to obtain alcohol products, with drinking and driving rates as high as 20% among this grade level. With such alarming risks, the question is raised - how can we help teens be ready to face these tough decisions about drugs and alcohol? Glen Cove High School health education teachers have teamed up with The Partnership at Drugfree.org to accomplish this task.

Recently, the Glen Cove Police Department, Glen Cove School District, and SAFE, Inc.'s PRIDE Project Coalition teamed up with The Partnership at Drugfree.org to be trained in the PACT360 - Police And Communities Together program. PACT360 is a law enforcement-led community prevention education system designed to deal with existing drug issues and rapidly respond to emerging drug threats. The goal is to help reduce illicit drug use and its accompanying criminal behavior thereby improving the safety and quality of life of the community – a goal that the PRIDE Coalition and Glen Cove Police Department have been working toward in Glen Cove for several years.

During the month of April, Health students at Glen Cove High School participated in wreckED, the educational youth component of PACT 360. The program encourages teens to think more introspectively about their own and their friends' behavior regarding alcohol/drugs, and to consider the associated consequences of getting involved. The program also motivates them to be proactive in "looking out" for their friends who may be engaging in unhealthy behaviors.

The wreckED presentation started out with a video depicting all aspects of the contemporary drug and alcohol scene that is part of teen life today, as well as real-life stories of addiction and recovery from the A&E Network program series *Intervention*. Following the video, the teacher led a group discussion using individual observations of depictions in the video as conversation starters. Students spoke openly about the reasons the teens in the video decided to use drugs, and several related it to their own experiences in their lives. Students spoke about what influences

them to make decisions, including peers, family expectations, and even aspirations after high school.

Next the students played the wreckED interactive card game, focused on the issues presented in the video, simulating real life choices, behaviors, and consequences. The card game personalizes the choices, behaviors, and resulting consequences, giving the teens the opportunity to play out scenarios from their own experiences and viewpoints.

“The wreckED program is instrumental in helping us to connect with our students and encourage them to discuss these potentially dangerous issues in an appropriate setting. We are grateful to The Partnership at Drugfree.org for providing such a resourceful program,” stated Denise Kiernan, Director of Health & Physical Education and PRIDE Coalition School Committee Chair.

For more information on the PACT360 program, visit www.drugfree.org/pact360. To access online resources from the Partnership, visit www.drugfree.org, www.timetotalk.org, and www.timetoact.drugfree.org. For more information on attending a PACT360 program in Glen Cove, contact the SAFE, Inc. office at (516) 676-2008.



Kim Riso, Glen Cove High School Health Educator, assists with the wreckED card game, discussing with students what impacts their decisions and what the consequences may be.