

## SAFE'S PRIDE COALITION PARENT COMMITTEE

### *Choices & Consequences at Glen Cove High School*

District Attorney Kathleen Rice knows the reality that reckless driving can have on the lives of our young people. That is why she is bringing the message of safe driving to Nassau County's High Schools. On, May 27, 2010 the Nassau County District Attorney's office, in conjunction with SAFE, Inc. and Glen Cove School District, visited the Glen Cove High School Senior class to deliver this message through the Choices & Consequences Program.

In January 2010, SAFE Inc. in conjunction with Glen Cove School District administered the Bach-Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment to sixth-, eighth-, 10th- and 12th-graders. Used to determine risk and protective factors among youth and teens, this survey revealed that drinking and driving rates are as high as 20 percent in the 12th-grade – a truth that could be fatal if not addressed.

The Choices and Consequences program is designed to do just that. A 90 minute, interactive high school presentation designed to combat drunk, drugged and reckless driving, it is based on a "reality TV" model that relies on real cases, real evidence and real people from cases. The program aims to break through natural teenage invincibility to teach life-saving lessons. Traffic crashes are the number one cause of death for young people between the ages of 15 and 24. The District Attorney's goal is to reduce injuries and deaths in this most vulnerable age group.



Paula Castiglia, PRIDE Project Coalition coordinator; Harry Balkin, Glen Cove High School social worker; Alyssa Allen, student volunteer; Brandon Figueroa, student volunteer; Marvin Tate, student volunteer; Suzanne Morales, student volunteer; Casey Lynch, student volunteer; Police Officer Smestad, Nassau County Police Department; Elizabeth Augner, Nassau County District Attorney's office, Vehicular Crimes Bureau; Sheryl Goodine, Glen Cove High School assistant principal.

The first segment of the program educates the students about criminal law, the social host law, safe driving techniques, toxicology and licensing issues. Presented by ADA Jessica Cepriano, this segment used real cases and real evidence to bring a true to life experience to students about the sobering reality that reckless driving

can have on the lives of those involved in these accidents. Students listened as Ms. Cepriano described in detail several cases in which reckless and drunk driving causes devastating consequences for both offenders and victims.



The second segment consisted of a skit where student volunteers re-enacted a driving situation in which passengers encourage the driver to drink and engage in other reckless driving. Nassau County Police Officer Smestad responded to the scene of the "crash" and explained the police procedures and the tests conducted. The student "driver" performed coordination tests wearing "Fatal Vision" goggles which simulated intoxication.

During the final segment, students heard from two offenders who were convicted on numerous charges related to reckless driving. Both offenders shared a brief overview of the circumstances of their convictions as well as how it has affected their personal lives and relationships. Students left the presentation knowing the truth about drunk and reckless

driving and recognizing the ways it could change their lives forever.

Glen Cove's Substance Abuse Free Environment (SAFE, Inc.) was established in 1981 to combine the strengths of the public and private sectors in the Glen Cove community to provide alcohol and drug prevention services. In 2004, and again in 2008, SAFE, Inc. received a Drug-Free Communities Support Program Grant from the Office of National Drug Control Policy, making it one of only 224 agencies nationwide to be so awarded. The PRIDE Project Coalition is overseen by SAFE's Board of Directors and co-chaired by Executive Director Dr. Sharon E. Harris and Glen Cove School District Director of Administrative Services, Dr. Joseph Hinton. The board is made up of parents, police personnel, educators, and health care, financial and business professionals.

For more information regarding SAFE Inc., the PRIDE Coalition, or underage drinking, drinking and driving, contact PRIDE Project Coordinator Paula Castiglia at 676-2008 or visit [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org).



As "crash car" was placed at the entrance to the Glen Cove High School to remind students and parents of the consequences of underage drinking, especially during prom and graduation season.