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## SAFE, Inc Presents Survey Findings At Town Hall Meeting

*While the survey shows that kids are beginning use at a younger age,  
the overall risk factor for Glen Cove students is close to the national average*

By JILL NOSSA  
jnossa@antonnews.com

SAFE, Inc held a town hall meeting in the main chambers of Glen Cove City Hall last week to apprise the community on where the children of this district stand in terms of drug and alcohol use.

Dr. Bernard S. Gorman, the drug-free community program evaluator, presented the results from the Bach-Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment Survey that was given to

students in sixth, eighth, 10th and 12th grade earlier this year. He began by explaining the community's drug control policy, stressing that prevention is the best approach, and educating students as the negatives of drug use, as well as educating the community on the risks, is important for stopping drug use before it begins.

The model of Bach-Harrison survey is based on the idea that "it takes a village to raise a child," so the school, family, peers and

larger community are all important factors to consider when approaching the issue of tobacco, alcohol and drug use.

Some of the past surveys were addressed, and it was noted in the presentation that Glen Cove became the first municipality in Nassau County to draft and implement a Social Host Law, which makes it a violation to allow anyone under the age of 21 to consume alcohol

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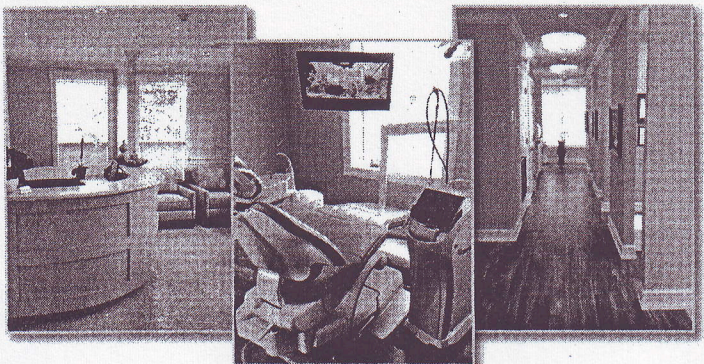
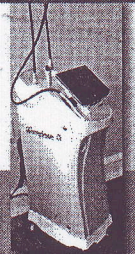


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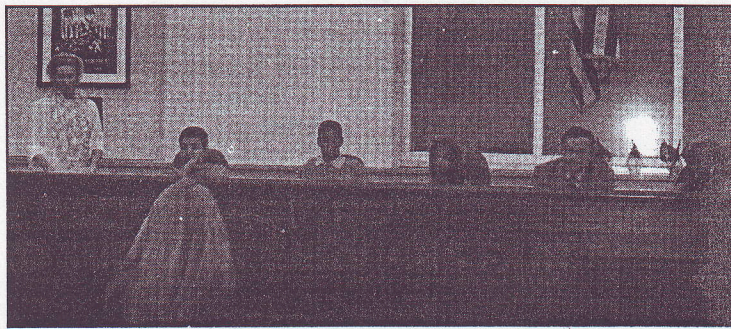


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Student leaders from the Glen Cove Boys & Girls Club with the community representatives for the SAFE coalition. Photo by Laura Lane

### SAFE, Inc Presents Survey Findings

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in the home. In 2009, the coalition provided training to law enforcement officers to assist with enforcing the sale of alcohol to minors; before the project was enacted, 40 percent of merchants sold alcohol to undercover decoys used for research purposes, and in the past year, no merchants have sold alcohol to minors. Shoulder Tap laws have also been set in place, a law that targets adults providing alcohol to minors at no cost. A total of 12 cases have been opened to date. Last year, a "Lock Up Your Meds" campaign was launched in collaboration with the Glen Cove Senior Center in collaboration with local pharmacies to make people aware of the risks of allowing children access to prescription medications.

Other social initiatives that have taken place in Glen Cove include the Police And Communities Together (PACT) 360 program, which has presented information to more than 1000 students. Last year, the SAFE rides program was established, a student lifeline service that provides free taxi rides to any student in need of a safe ride home, the goal of which is to reduce the risks associated with drinking and driving. Additionally, a Teens As Teachers program was implemented in the schools several years ago, a peer leadership initiative where students from Finley Middle School are trained to teach a full period on the risks of tobacco use to students in Connolly and Landing Elementary Schools; the program is coordinated by health teacher and Councilman Anthony Gallo, Jr.

The findings conclude that 87 percent of sixth-graders had not yet consumed alcohol, while only 23 percent of 12th-graders claim to have never used alcohol, and that most students had their first drink after the age of 13. The survey showed that students in sixth grade who had used alcohol have started younger, with the reported age of onset now being 10, as compared to age 11 in 2010. While the survey showed that 25 percent of students drink on one or more occasions overall, the rate of use has decreased about 10 percent in all grades.

In terms of binge drinking, 10th-graders have a reported rate of 27 percent, higher than the national average of 16 percent, but lower than the reported rate of 41 percent for 2010. The 12th-graders are also reportedly binge drinking at a higher rate than the national average, at 44 percent for Glen Cove students compared to 23 percent nationally. The findings show that a significant number of students are obtaining alcohol from parties, family members other than their parents, or from the home without permission.

Regarding marijuana use, the survey shows that students are beginning to use the substance at an earlier age, with reports of students first using at age 11, compared with 13.5 in the 2010 survey. The use of marijuana was lower than the national average for eighth-graders, but higher for both 10th- and 12th-graders by about 8 percent for both grades. Across these three grades, the 30-day marijuana use is higher than cigarette use rates. Reports of prescription narcotic use decreased from 4 percent in 2010 to 1 percent in 2012 for all grades combined.

Attitudes towards drug use, interaction with antisocial peers and protection in terms of family, school, religion and community support all play crucial roles in determining whether or not a child will begin using illegal substances.

Melissa Tierney, executive director of the Glen Cove Boys & Girls Club, said "I am proud of the community...it is proof that Glen Cove cares about kids; children do have many other options on evenings and weekends to avoid antisocial behaviors." She introduced the students who represent the youth committee and said, "These kids are the best advocates."

Councilman Tony Jimenez, who is a member of the SAFE coalition, said about Glen Cove, "We are pioneers- we see a need and do the right thing. We need to continue the things we've done, look at why kids are starting use at a younger age and what can we do to alleviate the problem. We're not going to back away from the problem...we will continue to work hard for the children."



Members of the coalition, the directors of SAFE and others deemed instrumental in spreading the organization's message. Photo by Jill Nossa

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