



**For Immediate Release  
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**Contact: Sharon Harris  
PRIDE Project Coalition  
Laura Lane, Safe Public Relations**

### **In Many Ways the Kids are Alright**

*SAFE, Inc's PRIDE surveys kids on alcohol, tobacco, and drug use*

With all the negative and alarming reports of drug and alcohol abuse among youths it was comforting to learn at a town hall meeting held by SAFE, Inc. that in Glen Cove, at least to a large extent, our children are alright.

Those who attended the Thursday, April 26, SAFE, Inc. meeting learned the results of the Bach-Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment Survey ("the survey") which had been administered by the Glen Cove School District to students in grades six, eight, 10, & 12 in January. The survey assessed the use of alcohol, marijuana, tobacco and other drugs by Glen Cove youth.

Addressing an audience of educators, community leaders, public officials, parents and youth Georgie Connett, Safe Board Chair, explained that the survey is one avenue SAFE, Inc. utilizes to support the efforts of the PRIDE Project Coalition to eliminate drug and alcohol abuse among Glen Cove youth. Funded by a Drug-Free Communities Act ("DFC") federal grant, the survey is used to gauge the effectiveness of the Coalition's efforts and to remain cognizant of the areas that need to be addressed.

"For nine years we have been on a mission to try to eliminate drug and alcohol abuse in the community," said Connett. "There have been a lot of positive results from the hard work of SAFE and the PRIDE Project Coalition. It takes all sectors of the community to do this work and all of the sectors are represented this evening."

Mayor Ralph Suozzi said the Coalition and its accomplishments truly reflect the essence of community collaborations, the key to success for any grassroots change. The Mayor has been honorary Chair of the Coalition since taking office and is a former member of the Coalition's Parent Committee.

Dr. Bernard S. Gorman, SAFE's Grant Evaluator and a research psychologist, presented the survey findings in a detailed Power-Point presentation.

"We began using the Bach-Harrison Survey in 2008," said Dr. Gorman adding that national data is used as a comparison. "It looks like you have some fundamentally good kids. Risky behavior within the community seems to be lower than in 2010."

The survey indicated that across the board there has been an increase in student's beliefs that alcohol is harmful. The Coalition's prevention effort seems to be taking effect. But the survey also indicated that alcohol continues to be the substance of choice for Glen Cove's youth as sixth graders are using alcohol earlier, from age 11 in 2010 to age 10 in 2012. This trend continues through the eighth and 10th grade. 12<sup>th</sup> graders said they began drinking at 14, the same age the onset was reported in the 2010 survey.

The survey found that although tobacco use is higher in the upper grades, it is lower than the national average. Marijuana use is typical as compared to the rest of the country but use among Glen Cove 10<sup>th</sup> graders is higher than the national average.

Use of inhalants dropped for sixth graders from 23 percent in 2010 to 4 percent now and use among eighth graders is similar to the national average. 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders at Glen Cove are below the national average. For all grades the combined prescription drug use decreased from seven percent in 2010 to three percent in 2012.

After Dr. Gorman's presentation, the Coalition's committee chairs addressed the audience.

Melissa Tierney, Executive Director of the Glen Cove Boys & Girls Club and the Coalition's Youth Committee Co-Chair, asked youth members to join her and other committee chairs at the podium. The eight children, members of the Boys and Girls Club and also Glen Cove students wore t-shirts with SAFE's Youth Committee's motto, "Speak Up Get Heard." They are committed to encouraging their peers to choose healthy alternatives to drugs and alcohol.

"I am proud of these young people who have chosen to be here," she said. "These kids are our best assets. The Youth Committee of the PRIDE Project Coalition continues to be the ambassadors for our Coalition's message of preventing and reducing substance abuse among youth."

Tony Gallo, Coalition Co-Chair and City Councilman commended participants in the Coalition for their commitment to positive change in the community.

"The survey shows improvements in a number of areas and these improvements have been reached through a total team effort," he said. "I especially would like to commend and thank the Glen Cove Police Department for presenting to the students of our community the risks associated with drug use."

Denise Kiernan, Chair of Coalition School Committee, said "As always, we continue to appreciate the invaluable partnership with SAFE in our ongoing proactive efforts to ensure the safety of all of our students. The latest results of the Bach-Harrison survey help to provide us with a focus with which to address the needs of our students and school community at large."

Tony Jiminez, Community Committee Co-Chair and City Councilman, said the Coalition's success depends upon the downtown involvement.

"We need to continue to do what we've been doing and need to focus on the fact that children are being exposed to alcohol at a much younger age," he said. "We need to find out why."

Laurent Caballero, Parent Committee Chair, also teaches bi-lingual life skills to parents. She was very pleased that parents heard the results of the survey.

"The parents are scared to know that sixth graders are drinking," she said. "This has opened their eyes."

At the conclusion of the presentation, Nassau County Legislator Delia DiRiggi Whitton presented SAFE with a Citation commending the Coalition on their accomplishments. She expressed her personal appreciation since she is the mother of three daughters that are growing up in the Glen Cove.

For further information contact SAFE Inc., at (516) 676-2008. To view SAFE Inc.'s Public Service Announcement, visit [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org).