

Keep Meds Away From The Young

SAFE, Inc. visit Glen Cove Senior Center sharing Lock Up Your Meds! program

Aimee Abraham, the PRIDE Project Coalition Coordinator for SAFE Inc., visited seniors at the Glen Cove Senior Center on July 10 to share some very valuable information regarding how they can be proactive to ensure that only they are using their medications. She offered them some frightening statistics, but also assured them that they could take control of an issue that has become so serious, that a program has been developed to address it - Lock Up Your Meds!

"One in four teens have misused or abused prescriptions at least one time in their lifetime," Abraham said. "And Long Island has been pinpointed as having a prescription drug epidemic."

The teen parties of today have more than alcohol. Now prescription drugs are often available and the kids are getting these pills from their parents

counter drugs that it is safe, Abraham explained. And they think it is less addictive, too. "That isn't true," she said. "We hope you will share the information you've learned here with your grandkids. When you don't talk to the kids they may think it is okay to take the medications. We urge you to speak to your family."

Abraham acknowledged that many people may not understand why a young person would want to abuse prescription medication. "Some young people use it to relieve stress, depression, anxiety or they want to appear funny with their peers or just want to fit in," Abraham said.

And in some cases grandparents are acting as an unwitting supplier.

"Kids know the street value of your medications, what is the most lucrative, most powerful to numb you



Aimee Abraham, the PRIDE Project Coalition Coordinator for SAFE Inc., spoke to seniors at the Glen Cove Senior Center about Lock Up Your Meds!

hand to distribute to their customers, which include information on prescription medication prevention and education.

SAFE Inc. is committed to eliminating teen drug and alcohol use in Glen Cove. Through a combination of prevention, education, and law enforcement efforts, SAFE Inc. combats the devastating effects that can result

from underage drinking and drug use in order to build a safer Glen Cove.

To obtain a Medication Tracking card and other prescription drug resources, contact the SAFE office at 516-676-2008. For more information regarding SAFE, Inc and the PRIDE Coalition, or to view SAFE Inc.'s Public Service Announcement, visit www.safeglencove.org.

"Seventy percent of people over 12 who abuse prescription drugs get them from their family and friends," Abraham said. "We leave our prescriptions on our nightstand, on the kitchen counter and in the bathroom and don't think twice about it. But they can easily take it from these areas. The solution is promoting awareness."

In Glen Cove statistics indicate that prescription drug use is on the downside, but there are still some youth that are using. Results of the Bach-Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment Survey that was given to Glen Cove students in grades 6, 8, 10, & 12 in January 2012 indicates that the combined prescription drug use has decreased from seven percent in 2010 to three percent in 2012. This is good news, but there continues to be a problem among some youth.

"You might be thinking, 'Well we are doing well so why are we talking about this?' but we need to," Abraham said. "Teens have a misconception about meds - they think since a doctor is prescribing it is okay. They don't think about how when they are taking medication not prescribed to them the doctor is not there to monitor it and they have a misconception about over the counter drugs too."

Kids believe that since parents and adults administer over the

Executive Director Dr. Sharon Harris, who is also the PRIDE co-chair.

"Sometimes they go to a party and throw the pills in a bowl. We are trying to stop these kids in their tracks."

Family members can help by locking up medications in a safe place or hiding them in a location only known to them or someone that they trust. Abraham suggested seniors at the center take an inventory of what they have, properly dispose of old medications and she reiterated once again that they need to speak to their grandchildren.

"Parents can be the first line of defense in prescription drug abuse prevention," stated Harris. "We are so fortunate to have had the opportunity to visit the Senior Center, and with the help of the Glen Cove Senior Center's Director Carol Waldman, Activities Coordinator Jenny Weiss and staff we were able to spread this very important message."

Both the Glen Cove Chemists and Walgreens pharmacies have pledged support of the campaign, agreeing to attach a special sticker to all prescriptions of controlled substances during the month of March that will read "Don't forget to Lock Up These Meds!" reminding patrons of the importance of safeguarding medications. Both pharmacies will also have medication tracking cards on