

Tobacco Restriction Signage Posted At Local Playgrounds

The Glen Cove Substance Abuse Free Environment Agency (SAFE, Inc.), the Tobacco Action Coalition of LI (TAC) and the City of Glen Cove, have announced the expansion of the city's tobacco restrictions that were implemented in 2011 to include all of the city's parks, beaches and all youth-oriented aspects of the Stanco Park.

On Thursday, July 4, the city launched their independence from the danger of smoking in the city's outdoor recreational venues as part of their celebration of this very significant national holiday. Once again, the city pro-actively joined the ranks of nearly 400 municipalities statewide who have established tobacco free outdoor policies to protect their residents, employees, and the environment from the dangers of second-hand smoke, cigarette litter, and helping to change the social norms associated with the acceptability of tobacco use.

The Tobacco Action Coalition (TAC) is one 34 community partnerships funded by the NYS Department of Health's Tobacco Control Program working on the Tobacco Free Outdoor Initiative. Under this initiative, TAC is working with businesses and community organizations to implement voluntary entryway bans, as well as

educating local municipalities about the benefits of adopting tobacco use regulations for outdoor recreational areas such as playgrounds, parks and beaches. In addition to the technical support, TAC provides free signage. Therefore, this was a real win-win for the city and the residents in adopting policy to protect the community at no cost to the taxpayer.

With the mission of eliminating alcohol, tobacco, and substance abuse in Glen Cove, SAFE, Inc has been successfully serving their community since 1982 as the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention and education agency in Glen Cove, and shares many of the same concerns as TAC; most notably, keeping our young people free from the dangers of tobacco use and second-hand smoke. SAFE, with their long-standing excellent reputation in the city was the ideal partner for this venture.

After the success of their efforts to post signage to communicate the pilot project at Dennis Brain Murry and Stanco Park's Playgrounds and Danis Pocket Park Mayor Ralph Suozzi and the entire City Council along with Dr. Sharon Harris, Executive Director of Glen Cove SAFE, Inc. and Carol Meschkow, Nassau Coordinator for

the Tobacco Action Coalition were eager to further that policy work that was realized two years ago.

"It was an absolute pleasure to work with Mayor Suozzi, Dr. Harris, SAFE, Inc., and Darcy Belyea, the city's recreation director, who all feel passionately about protecting the citizens of their fair city," stated Mrs. Meschkow. "The Tobacco Action Coalition is most concerned about changing the social norms regarding tobacco use and protecting our next generation from the dangers of Second-hand Smoke, especially children. Their lungs are still maturing and smaller, and subsequently they breathe in 50 percent more air than an adult, making them more vulnerable to the dangers of tobacco smoke."

SAFE's mission to keep Glen Cove safe and protect our young people from the negative consequences of alcohol and substance abuse can't be accomplished in a vacuum. The value of community partnerships is imperative to our work here at SAFE, Inc. and on behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of SAFE we are grateful to have this effective collaboration to accomplish this goal.

"On behalf of the city, we are appreciative of the support that both

TAC and SAFE, Inc. have provided in accomplishing this Smoke Free Outdoor Air Initiative, and welcome this next step in keeping our parks clean and safe," commented Belyea, who is working with the Coalition and SAFE on selecting sites to post additional signage in the new locations.

The relationship between the three entities has expanded beyond the Smoke Free Outdoor Initiative to working with the local school district on the states Point-of-Sale "Seen Enough Tobacco" campaign to help prevent the next generation of from becoming replacement smokers. "Hopefully," said Meschkow "we can parlay on our strong bond and devotion for the community to include Smoke Free Housing Options for the city residents as well in the coming year."

TAC and SAFE are both delighted, and commend Mayor Ralph Suozzi and the City Council for their outstanding efforts to broaden their policy to include all of their majestic parks and beaches situated along the Islands famed gold coast.

For more information about the Tobacco Action Coalition of LI, visit www.breathefreely.org. For more information about SAFE, Inc. visit www.safeglencove.org.