



**For Immediate Release
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Learning the signs of bullying and how to help your child

SAFE, Inc. Parent University reaches parents at Connolly

SAFE, Inc.'s Glen Cove PRIDE Project Coalition is dedicated to eliminating alcohol and substance abuse in the Glen Cove Community. The Coalition's Parent Committee developed a Parent University Series in response to a survey given during all 'Open School Nights' in the Glen Cove School District to determine parental interest, and in response to the January 2012 Bach Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment Survey provided by SAFE, Inc. and administered by the Glen cove School District to grades 6, 8, 10 & 12.

The latest SAFE, Inc. Parent University was led by Glen Cove Police Sgt. Christopher Ortiz, Ph.D. at Connolly Elementary School on March 19. His topic – "Bullying and the Legal Consequences," offered explanations on why bullying is a problem for some children and ideas on how parents and caregivers can play a role in preventing bullying.

"This is an important topic that hits home for us," said PTA Co-chair Donna Christ. "We are thankful that SAFE is here for the presentation."

Bulling is not only an issue in Glen Cove. Nationwide children are bullied and schools and parents struggle to end what is unfortunately something that does not have many legal consequences. "We are law enforcement and are guided by laws," said Ortiz. "We can only go so far."

Ortiz explained what bullying is saying that there are many forms and the Internet has added a "new wrinkle" to bullying. "Bullying can come in the form of threats, rumors or physical acts," Ortiz said. "Bullying is not a normal childhood activity. Victimization should not be a part of any child's life."

When does rough playing cross the line and blossom into bullying? "The intent needs to be there and there must be multiple incidents of aggression," Ortiz explained. "Forms of bullying include physical actions like pushing, verbal which is a lot harder to pick up on, and relational behaviors designed to harm reputations and relationships like rumors, online images and social isolation."

According to Ortiz's statistics – 20 percent of high school students reported being bullied on school property and 28 percent of students from 12-18 years old were bullied during the 2010-2011 school year nationally.

"And two out of three bullying events go unreported," he said. "Children tell their parents but not their teachers."

Ortiz said that the consequences of being bullied are big. Children who are bullied have lower self-esteem, are lonely, have greater anxiety and are more depressed than

their peers. "Bullying is not a simple childhood act," said Ortiz. "It's important that we act and intervene."

He said that parents should be on the lookout for the following signs of bullying: if a child says they are being teased, threatened or tormented; if a child comes home with bruises or injuries; if a child's property is taken away or damaged; if they have few or no close friends at school; if a child has a derogatory nickname; if a child refuses to go to school or does not want to participate in school activities and if a child is not assertive.

What do you do? Ortiz said it is all about communication at home and then further action should be taken. "Contact school officials, police if you believe there is criminal action involved, but don't confront the other child's parents directly," he said. "I've seen an incident in school turn into an assault after school and then an arrest. Don't encourage your child to fight back because it may get worse and they may become a bully."

Ortiz concluded by saying that the Glen Cove Police Department is there to help parents if they need it regarding bullying. He encouraged parents to be proactive.

For further information on any SAFE, Inc. PRIDE Project Coalition and their initiatives contact Coalition Coordinator Aimee Abraham at 516-676-2008. SAFE Inc. is a not for profit tax exempt substance abuse education and prevention agency located in Glen Cove. Visit our website at www.safeglencove.org and follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/GlenCovePrideCoalition