



For Immediate Release
March 4, 2013

Contact: Sharon Harris
PRIDE Project Coalition

SAFE encourages a drug-free junior prom
GCHS juniors learn repercussions of poor choices

Sgt. Christopher Ortiz, Ph.D. of the Glen Cove Police Dept., brought a powerful pre-prom presentation to juniors at Glen Cove High School on Feb. 27. He impressed upon them the ramifications of the Social Host Law and the dangers of underage drinking and driving.

Ortiz is a Glen Cove native. He spent the first half of the assembly showing students his old photos when he went to Glen Cove High School where he played sports and even a photo where he is all dressed up before the junior prom. "All these experiences you are going through I went through," he said. "You are becoming adults and it is important that you make the right choices because there will be consequences if you don't."

There was a lot of chatter when Ortiz spoke about risk-taking and some students laughed too. Showing slides of pills, cigarette butts, alcohol, weed and cocaine, Ortiz moved forward warning that these narcotics were a dead end road. "It will just move you closer to death," he said. "Everyday people make the wrong decisions and I see it in my line of work. I've taken people out of smashed cars and had them take their last breath in my arms."

Then he showed a series of car accident slides and no one was talking or laughing anymore. The students were fascinated and sobered. Ortiz had their attention now. "The number one killer of kids your age is motor vehicle accidents," he said. "One quarter of all fatal accidents involve alcohol for people between 15 and 20 years of age."

SAFE lead presentations like the pre-prom in an effort to reach teenagers who may be considering making choices that will hurt them or others. Another goal is to change the path of students already engaged in destructive behavior. SAFE, Inc. has held Parent Universities and will continue to do so in an effort to address the findings in the Bach-Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment Survey given by the Glen Cove School District to students in grades 6, 8, 10, & 12 in January 2012. The survey, which assessed the use of alcohol, marijuana, tobacco and other drugs by Glen Cove youth indicated that alcohol continues to be the substance of choice for Glen Cove's youth and that they are drinking as early as 10. It also indicated that marijuana use among Glen Cove 10th graders is higher than the national average. The 11th graders going to the junior prom this year were in 10th grade when the survey was taken.

The next Parent University is scheduled for **Tuesday, March 19 at 7:30 p.m.** at Connolly Elementary School.

“There is no such thing as a safe drug,” Ortiz said. “All drugs, when misused, can lead to death. Beyond death, drug and alcohol use lead to other negative results like addiction, social isolation, arrest, and even homelessness. There are some things out there that when you experiment with you will be done.”

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