

## **Press Release**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **GLEN COVE HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH TOOK ACTION ON THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT TO ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE**

The Great American Smokeout is an annual reminder that quitting smoking is critical for good health. Sadly, the most at-risk populations in New York haven't been able to quit on this day or any other. The use of Tobacco is still the leading cause of preventable disease and death killing nearly 24,000 New Yorkers every year and afflicting nearly 600,000 New Yorkers with serious disease directly attributable to their smoking. Tobacco is not an equal opportunity killer – there has been no reduction in smoking rates among low-income adults, adults with poor mental health, and those with less than a high school education.

The School Committee of the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition continued their partnership with the Tobacco Action Coalition of Long Island (TAC) to address these concerns on a two week campaign starting on Thursday November 20th in celebration of G.A.S.O at the Glen Cove High School with students by bringing their attention to reducing their exposure to Tobacco Marketing. The Coalition is Co-Chaired by Anthony Gallo, GC HS Health Education Teacher and the School Committee is chaired Denise Kiernan-GC SD Director of Health, Phys Ed & Athletics.

Executive Director-Dr. Sharon Harris said, "SAFE's goal is early intervention and prevention education". Per Carol Meschkow-TACLI Nassau Project Coordinator, "Pharmacies are Licensed health care facilities and unfortunately the sale of tobacco products send an incongruent message to our youth. It's imperative to reduce youth exposure to tobacco marketing at the point of sale."

After several years of the partnership between the School Committee and TAC this year the youth in coordination with their advisors decided to expand their one day celebration to a two week awareness campaign to educate and solicit support from faculty, parents and peers for the need to ban tobacco sales in pharmacies. Per the American Heart Association," the availability of

tobacco products in pharmacies legitimizes its use and falsely suggests pharmacists support tobacco consumption". To kick off the two week campaign in honor of GASO the student leaders manned a table with Ashley Ferruffino, Coalition Liaison, with eprevention education materials supplied by SAFE and TAC. The day included a visit from the school newspaper reporter, Isabel Blas and youth photojournalist Aaron Hall. Other health education student volunteers solicited by Anthony Gallo included Michael Blas Giovanni Floro, Aura Rivera, Steven King, Erick Cru, Thomas Gracin, Sophia Zias, Adriana Tzavaras, Angelo Albanese, Meghan Smith, Delwin Hernandez, Roselle Cacio, Amanda Ieraci, Shawn Davis and Mary Monahan.

Over the course of the next two weeks the student leaders distributed post cards supplied by the TAC to petition pharmacies for adults to sign and carried youth banners around the school to motivate their peers to sign, and take a stand to end the sale of tobacco in pharmacies.

To culminate GASO, the students, administration, faculty, SAFE Executive Director, Dr. Sharon Harris, TAC Nassau Coordinator Carol Meschow, and local electorate gathered to view the display of adult and youth signatures collected. The gathering included New York State Assemblyman- Chuck Lavine, Nassau County Legislator- Delia DeRiggi-Whitton, , City of Glen Cove- Mayor Reginald Spinello, former City Council Trustee- Anthony Jimenez, Athletic Director- Denise Kiernan, Health Teachers- Anthony Gallo, Kim Riso, Principal Allen Hudson, Roseann Cirnigliaro, and Nadine Richards.

For more information on the Tobacco Action Coalition visit: [www.breathefreely.org](http://www.breathefreely.org) To get help quitting follow the icon for the NY New York State Smokers' Quitline or call 1-866-NY-QUITS.

For further information on SAFE, Inc and their initiatives contact SAFE at: 516-676-2008 or visit the website at [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org)