

SAFE Teaches Importance Of Sportsmanship And Civility

By **RECORD PILOT STAFF**

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Glen Cove eighth-graders were visited by the "cool kids" in gym class recently when the members of SALT (Student Athlete Leadership Team) stopped by to talk about the importance of sportsmanship and civility. SALT members are trained to do peer to peer training with the district's middle school students to teach them how to be leaders, good friends and have good values, and the students always enjoy the visits.

SAFE, Inc. PRIDE Project Coalition partners with the SALT program, led by Denise Kiernan, director of health, physical education and athletics for the Glen Cove School District to help keep the program running.

"Being fair, respectful and being a better person, that's what sportsmanship is," said SALT President Sam DiPaola, who is also the class president. "Bringing sportsmanship into everyday life, well, that's civility."

The members of SALT are from every sport imaginable. They are recommended by varsity coaches based on their leadership skills and academics within their programs to become a part of the popular



The student athletic leadership team speak to middle school students about the importance of sportsmanship and civility.

opportunity to learn from the leaders in the athletic program."

SAFE was instrumental last year in purchasing the t-shirts designed and worn by the students during their training sessions at Molloy and Finley Middle School. This year, the message was "Lead by Example" and included

training, which was supported by SAFE, Inc. They attended a keynote address by Jimmy Conrad, Captain of the US Men's National Soccer Team, who spoke about "Sports as a Social Metaphor for the Health and Well Being of Players Part I," and then attended several workshops.

exceeded my expectations."

The members of 2013-14 SALT are: Presidents: Mike Burrell and Sam Di Paola, both seniors; seniors Allie Cappiello, Maleesha Ebanks, Gillian Farnan, Elsie Goodman, Elizabeth Wilson, Jackie Hayduck, Caterina Ienopoli, Jo Jo Nicolich, Carlos Rivera,

program. There are more than 35 students in SALT and all are leaders on their individual teams.

"We lead by example," said DiPaola. "We are stepping out of our comfort zone when we speak to the kids, telling them our own stories, but in the end it works out well. They accept us."

This is the third year that Kiernan has worked with the SALT program at Glen Cove High School.

"Student athletes fill out an application which are reviewed by me, the high school physical education teacher/coach Mr. Kopecky and Mrs. Zupa, the middle school physical education teacher/coach," said Kiernan, adding that they all attend the training sessions with the students. "The experiences and messages that SALT members share are powerful and provide our students with an

the logo from SAFE as a sponsor.

"The topics the SALT athletes talk about are very important and will help prepare the middle school kids for when they get to high school," said physical education teacher Angela Zupa. "This program helps alleviate the anxiety of going to high school."

The members of SALT attend training sessions at Molloy College conducted in conjunction with Athletes Helping Athletes, to serve as role models within Glen Cove HS. There they work with professional athletes to create and deliver motivational messages to the students at Finley Middle School on drug and alcohol abuse prevention, sportsmanship, citizenship and the importance of academics.

Additionally, this year six members of SALT went to Hofstra in March for

Kiernan said she led one of the workshops, Creating Team Leadership & Service Opportunities in Your School District, where, "I also had a very strong message about sportsmanship, and creating high school memories."

There will be a meeting in the future to take what was learned at the workshops and incorporate it into next year's SALT program.

Kiernan is proud of the student athletes.

"These student athletes have taken this program seriously," said Kiernan. "SALT members take a pledge to encourage younger students to participate in athletics or other extra-curricular activities, and to educate their peers in the areas of drug and alcohol abuse prevention, steroid use, good sportsmanship, and living by example. The SALT program has

Erik Washington and Rashawn White; juniors Nicole Bedell, Brittany Brown, Catilin Brown, Andrew Gerin, Phil Grella, Selena Guastella, Gabrielle Heenan, Daniella Hugel, Kevin Shannon, Selena Nasary, Rosa Pangari, Sean Peet, Joe Reyes and Dylan Silas; and sophomores Grace Blinkoff, Jonathan Capobianco, Alex Casale, Gaetano Famiglietti, Geofferey Field, Michael Hatala, Amanda Heavey, Brandon Leon and Kiara Vidal.

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 www.safeglencove.org and www.facebook.com/GlenCovePrideCoalition.