

Are our kids drinking, taking drugs, and smoking? SAFE shares results of youth survey at Town Hall!

The results of the Bach-Harrison Prevention Needs Assessment Survey are in! The survey administered biannually at the Glen Cove School District to students in grades 6th through 12th were shared with the public by SAFE, Inc. at Town Hall on Tuesday, Sept. 16. The survey assessed the current use of alcohol, marijuana, tobacco and other drugs by Glen Cove youth, and also offered longitude historical data from prior surveys to compare and contrast.

“Every community has drug and alcohol use,” said Georgie Connett, SAFE Board Chair and Strategic Planner for the Coalition charged with analyzing the needs assessment data. “Ten years ago we applied for a drug free community grant to change societal norms about alcohol and substance abuse through a sustainable Coalition. We have accomplished that task as you will see here this evening. Additionally, a Foundation has been formed, entitled the Glen Cove Community PRIDE Foundation, Inc. to continue the Coalition’s efforts and support other community based organizations who believe in early prevention and healthy lifestyles” .

The survey is one avenue SAFE, Inc. utilizes to support the efforts of the PRIDE Project Coalition to eliminate drug and alcohol abuse among Glen Cove youth. Funded by a Drug-Free Communities Act (“DFC”) federal grant, the survey is used to gauge the effectiveness of the Coalition’s efforts and to remain cognizant of the areas that need to be addressed.

“SAFE is a tremendous organization,” said Glen Cove Mayor Spinello. “I’m very proud we passed a ban on hookah bars. This administration cares about the youth of Glen Cove.”

The Coalition, in partnership with Carol Meschkow-Nassau Project Coordinator of the Tobacco Action Coalition of Long Island initiated this sweeping legislative action. Ms Meschkow appreciates the opportunity to support the community in our ongoing efforts to remain pro-active on behalf of the local youth.

Dr. Bernard S. Gorman, independent Grant Evaluator and Research Psychologist, shared the information from the survey in a PowerPoint presentation. He said that the survey grants people more information than whether or not young people have used drugs. “We want to know at what age, do they perceive the risk, do the parents disapprove,” he added.

Survey Highlights--usage from 6th to 12th grade mirrored National norms for substances abuse across the board whether it be alcohol, drugs or tobacco with the alarming exception of the fact that in Glen Cove our 8th graders binge drinking is above the National average. We are getting the message across as we are for the most part on a par with our peers communities, but clearly the challenges are great, and there is more work to be done.

The survey shows that most sixth graders haven’t used alcohol yet. The lifelong use of alcohol among sixth graders has decreased by 1.9% since the last time the survey was administered,

which was in 2012. Lifetime use between tenth and twelfth graders has also decreased, but eighth grade lifetime use has increased by 2.1%. Binge drinking was also surveyed. It has decreased among sixth and tenth grades but increased among eighth and twelfth graders. And eighth grade binge drinking in Glen Cove is higher than the national average. Since the 2012 survey lifetime use of marijuana has decreased in grades eight, ten and twelve. Lifetime use among sixth graders remained at 0%. As for prescription lifetime drug use, it has decreased between eighth and twelfth graders. Sixth graders' use remains the same at 0%. Tenth graders lifetime use has increased from 2.6% in 2012 to 4.3% in 2014. Sixth grade cigarette use slightly increased. By the time students reach the eighth grade 9.8% have tried smoking at least once, which is a large increase from sixth grade. Cigarette use between tenth and twelfth graders continues to increase.

Following the survey results, representatives of the Coalition's four Committees, all serving our local Glen Cove youth, addressed the audience providing information about the respective committees and their immediate action plan to incorporate this latest data in their future action plans to address this matter.

Coalition School Committee Chair Denise Kiernan, who is also the Director of Health, Physical Education & Athletics for the District spoke about the HS SALT (Student Athlete Leadership Team) program. The members of SALT, are trained to do peer to peer training with the district's middle school students. "The SALT members have worked hard to teach good decision making," Kiernan said, adding that she was proud of their efforts.

Coalition Co-Chair and Community Committee Chair Tony Gallo continued "We are continuing our efforts to create a SAFE Rides card Smartphone app in partnership with Staff Sergeant David You and Staff Sergeant Ohiro Aquino of the National Guard Counter Drug Task Force so kids in a bad situation can utilize the app to get home safely".

The Coalition's Youth Committee Co-Chaired by Melissa Rhodes, Executive Director of the Glen Cove Boys and Girls Club and Arlene O'Dell, Executive Director of the Glen Cove Youth Bureau" commented "We plan to continue our workshops with the National Guard and the Youth Bureau will continue to work with SAFE in our After Three Program which is for kids and parents," O'Dell said. Bureau Youth Employment Coordinator Jacki Yonick continued, "It is very important that we have their thoughts included on future discussions and plans."

Coalition Parent Committee Chair Laurent Caballero said she would continue to run her workshops for Spanish speaking parents. "They don't know the (English) language and I don't want them to be in the dark,"

A special highlight of the evening was when the Students from the Youth Bureau spoke eloquently at the Town Hall meeting about how they are helping the community representing what is positive in Glen Cove.

For further information on any SAFE, Inc. PRIDE Project Coalition and their initiatives contact SAFE 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.
