

Glen Cove Youth Step Up and Call for a Reduction of Tobacco Marketing on Kick Butts Day 2016

Glen Cove High School students will take a stand on Kick Butts Day 2016 through awareness activities organized and chaired by the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition's School Committee. Kick Butts Day is a day of national activism sponsored by the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids that empowers youth to stand out, speak up and seize control against Big Tobacco. The High School students will become educated on tobacco marketing techniques and will be encouraged to raise awareness with their peers and adult leaders of the problems of tobacco use in their community, and the misleading message associated with tobacco sales in local pharmacies.

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition is pleased to once again be partnering with the Tobacco Action Coalition of LI, and their "Seen Enough Tobacco" campaign" to reduce our youth's exposure to tobacco marketing. "Our local youth have stressed that they feel CVS's decision to ban the sale of tobacco demonstrates the importance of this campaign in bringing awareness to the public and our elected officials of the need to reduce their exposure to tobacco marketing", per Ashley Ferruffino-SAFE Coalition Liaison. "Further tobacco marketing has been declared a youth epidemic by former Surgeon General Benjamin, so today we are encouraged

to see our next generation step up and call for a reduction in youth's exposure to tobacco marketing".

In New York, \$235 million a year, or nearly \$650,000 a day, is spent on marketing tobacco products and 280,000 kids under 18 today in NYS today will ultimately die prematurely due to smoking. In fact, if the current smoking rates continue 5.6 million Americans younger than 18 who are alive are projected to die prematurely from smoking related diseases.

"Tobacco sales in pharmacies is raising moral questions, as tobacco is the only consumer product that when used as intended, will kill at least one half of its long term users. Its displays in stores and trusted local pharmacies give youth the impression that tobacco products are easily accessible and tobacco use is acceptable. We are so proud of the activism of the teens at Glen Cove High School; and are grateful for our continued partnership with the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition as we have seen many teen leaders emerge over the years," said Carol Meschkow-Nassau Coordinator for the Tobacco Action Coalition of LI.

"Smoking is deadly, and we need to work together to protect our impressionable teens from the lure of this dangerous product; and that's why the physical education and athletic department for the

Glen Cove School district is particularly concerned. We strive to motivate, and stress that our teens take a stand and speak out for themselves. It is satisfying to see our students advocate for causes that they believe in such as challenging local pharmacies to re-consider the display of deceptive tobacco marketing promotions", said Anthony Gallo- GCHS Health Teacher.

According to Dr. Sharon Harris- Executive Director of the SAFE Glen Cove coalition, "a study recently released by the American Cancer Society found that smokers toll on health is worse than previously thought. The study found five additional diseases attributable to smoking and estimated that an additional 60,000 deaths each year in the US are due to tobacco use. This alarming statistic brings the total annual death toll to 540,000 people dying every year due to smoking related diseases. In NYS 108,500 High School students smoke cigarettes, and each year 135,000 kids initiate their addiction as daily smokers".

In New York State, 82 percent of retailers including pharmacies, convenience stores and gas stations occupy at least half of the space behind counters to openly display tobacco products for all to purview. The Glen Cove High School student leaders have

seen enough tobacco marketing and are banding together with the same message, "we want to be the first generation to be tobacco free!"

To learn more about the harmful effects of tobacco marketing in retail stores and pharmacies visit: www.tobaccofreenys.org. For Quit help contact the NYS Quit Line at 1-866-NYS-Quits.

For more information about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition visit SAFE Inc. at: www.safeglencove.org, or follow them on: www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition.