

Press Release
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Another Banner Year for SAFE and the Tobacco Action Coalition of Long Island

Upon reflection, 2017 was another fruitful year for the Tobacco Action Coalition (TAC) and SAFE, Inc. in bringing tobacco awareness and working towards advancing a tobacco free community. Once again, the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition and Carol Meschkow, Nassau Manager of TAC partnered with the School District for youth engagement activities to draw attention to the need to reduce our youth's exposure to tobacco marketing for three major days of tobacco awareness; Kick Butts Day, World No Tobacco Day and the Great American Smoke Out.

The youths have been actively educating their peers and local electorate for the past several years on the need to raise awareness to the benefits of Tobacco Free Pharmacies in removing these products and their advertisements from local drugstore and retail establishments. To seize control of the problem, the teens ran empowering programs using campaign materials supplied by TAC. After educating the students on the dangers of tobacco marketing they mobilized to take a stand against "Big Tobacco" with tabling events, tweets to their peers, and a Letter to the Editor. Over the last several years it has been very rewarding to see many teen leaders emerge.

With the average age of onset at 13, this year's efforts were expanded further down to the MS Health Classes and City of Glen Cove Youth Bureau "After 3" Middle School Program, and evidence based Life Skills Training program where the teens learned all about the efforts and money the tobacco lobby spends to market their deadly products where our youth are exposed to on a daily basis. The students also learned about the Tobacco Industry's RICO Violations; and efforts to defraud the public on the health effects of smoking, their marketing to children, and the subsequent court ordered Corrective Statements on five topics where they deceptively deceived the public.

The teens impressed us with their knowledge of the health risks associated with tobacco usage and their resolve not to get lured into a lifelong addiction. The teens complete Youth Comment Card expressing their concerns to their peers and local leaders and brought home Adult Pledge Cards supplied by TAC for their parents to sign as well.

The Middle School teens from Ms. Sullivan and Mr. Carbone's Health Classes empowered themselves with knowledge and wrote a strong Letter to the Editor. After a full day of school the Glen Cove Youth Bureau's "After 3 Program" was really engaged and very eager to share what they knew on the topic and to learn more about the campaign to reduce tobacco marketing".

In addition to the major days of tobacco awareness, TAC has been busy working with the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition attending various community events such as Family Awareness Day to interface and educate the families of the City on the dangers of tobacco, and positive solutions. The Coalition partnership continued collection of local data and ongoing efforts to bring environmental strategies to the community, identify tobacco use trends, and assist the youth with destructive decisions making and providing treatment for addictive behaviors.

As an active Coalition Member TAC was involved with the process, including updating the community on the expansion of the Clean Indoor Air Laws to include e-cigarettes. In fact our local City of Glen Cove Survey data indicated the need for continued prevention education efforts in this area, especially at the Middle School level where initial exploration begins. Alarminglly the incidence of electronic cigarettes has risen exponentially since 2011 and in the Coalition's proactive fashion they have been busy gathering and sharing the trends and have worked closely with TAC to raise awareness and dispense the information.

The Mayor and the City Council have worked closely with SAFE and TAC and have adopted progressive legislation in the past few years to address the advent and explosive usage of vaping products and establishments.

In addition Ms. Meschkow made the Coalition Members aware of the Department of Justice Racketeering Case against the Tobacco Industry and the resulting yearlong court ordered newspaper and television advertisements to let the public know the truth about the lethal consequences of smoking and how they had been deceived by the Industry about the associated health risks.

Over the decade since the Coalition and TAC have collaborated together to promote a Tobacco Free Community, several local stakeholders have partnered with the State's Tobacco Free Outdoor and Smoke Free Multi-Unit Housing initiatives. The City of Glen Cove and the City's Housing Authorities and several other local youth and community agencies have adopted the State's Tobacco Free Outdoor Initiative for their organizations to protect the public from the dangers of second hand smoke, and to help change the social norms associated with tobacco usage.

This past year the City of Glen Cove and the Glen Cove Senior Center both joined our other local Champions and have adopted new entryway bans to protect their visitors and staff, and Living Water for Women established a smoke free housing policy and has also limited smoking outdoors to a designated area behind their residence.

Setting the groundwork for 2018, the partners have continued discussions with the Glen Cove Housing Authority regarding their efforts to go smoke free, and have reached out to faith based and other influential organizations to educate them on their role as community leaders in changing societal norms regarding the acceptability of smoking.

Looking back, 2017 was a tremendous year particularly with expanding our focus to the Middle School; and we anticipate seeing more successes in advancing toward a tobacco free Glen Cove in the coming year.

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

To learn more about the harmful effects of tobacco visit: www.tobaccofreenys.org or for help with quitting contact the State's Quitline at: 1-866-NY-QUITS.