

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT:

Dr. Sharon Harris 516- 676-2008

safeglencove@yahoo.com

### **SAFE Glen Cove Coalition Celebrates the Great American Smokeout**

On Thursday November 15<sup>th</sup>, in celebration of the Great American Smoke-Out, Glen Cove School Districts' students took the opportunity to remind their friends, faculty and families that today should be their first day towards quitting this deadly habit. The American Cancer Society marks the Great American Smoke Out on the third Thursday of November each year by encouraging smokers to use the date to make a quit plan or to plan on quitting smoking that day. By quitting, even for one day, smokers will be moving towards a healthier life – one that can lead to reducing their risk of cancer related illnesses.

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, responsible for killing nearly 25,000 New Yorkers every year, and afflicting nearly 600,000 New Yorkers with serious disease directly related to their smoking, hence the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition School Committee is pleased to once again partner with the Tobacco Action Coalition of LI (TAC) to raise awareness of the need to reduce youth's exposure to tobacco marketing at their local retailers on this special day.

For GASO, under the guidance of Health Teacher and SAFE's Coalition Co- Chair-Anthony Gallo students were educated by playing public service messages with the daily announcements. In addition, educational messaging will be aired all week long on the Athletic Department Television about the dangers of tobacco, including data generated by the student's research of the matter.

“Tobacco companies spend a half million dollars every day aggressively marketing tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, in stores throughout New York State with colorful walls of tobacco products, special discounts and other marketing materials—all of which is highly appealing to youth. The Tobacco Industry does a majority of their marketing in stores in communities where 75 percent of teens shop at least once a week. That's precisely why we are continually staying consistent with our message to our youth to be aware of this marketing tactic and its placement in their purview” said Mr. Gallo.

In the Middle School Health Teachers -Matt Carbone and Amanda Sullivan informed students about the dangers of tobacco, the lure of tobacco marketing and guiding them in researching facts about the health consequence of tobacco use.

To culminate the day, students enrolled in the Youth Bureau's Glen Cove After 3 Program also received the prevention messages of GASO through SAFE's Life Skills Program.

According to Mr. Spiro Tsirkas, Executive Director of the Youth Bureau and SAFE Coalition Youth Committee Chair, "working as a partner in this collaborative effort enriches our service to the local youth and their families, and reinforces what they are learning in the Middle School."

"The Surgeon General's report calling smoking among youth a pediatric epidemic is a driving force in our Coalition's efforts between our members, SAFE, the School District and our long time community partner TAC. It's critical to protecting our local youth from tobacco and other addictions" said Dr. Sharon Harris Executive Director of SAFE and Co-Chair of the Coalition.

"I am proud of the Students of this district, the facility and our local leaders" said Director of Health, Physical Education & Athletics- Peter Cardone, "Smoking is the number one preventable cause of cancer and we need to work together to protect our teens from a lifelong addiction; and that's why our classes strives to educate, and motivate our teens to take a stand and speak out for themselves Research shows by reducing the amount of tobacco marketing that our children see in stores, fewer youth start smoking. Their collective voices speak volumes."

"Each year 135,000 youth initiate the addiction as daily smokers. TAC is working hard with our community partners through prevention education to address this deadly threat to our youth. "Our goal today is to help raise awareness of how Big Tobacco companies strategize to place cigarette marketing where most youth frequent on a regular basis, and are making the youth aware of the need to calling upon their local leaders to take action to protect them from a potential lifelong addiction" concluded Ms. Meschkow. On GASO jointly we challenge our friends and love ones who smoke to "Quit like Champions."

SAFE Agency strives to continually provide exceptionally high quality prevention programs in the City of Glen Cove. We firmly believe in coordinating, communicating and cooperating with all local stakeholders in all programs we develop. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on [www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition](http://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition) or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the Opioid Epidemic at [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org).

For Quit help contact the NYS Quit Line: at 1-866-NYS-Quits.