

Press Release May 14, 2018

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### **SAFE Participates in National Prevention Week**

**The annual health observance helps increase public awareness of, & action around, mental illness, substance use disorders, or both**

SAFE encourages Glen Cove Residents to get involved in the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMSHA) ninth annual National Prevention Week (NPW), happening May 12th - May 18th. Each year around this observance, communities and organizations across the country come together to raise awareness about the importance of substance use prevention and positive mental health. This annual event aims at increasing public awareness and prevention of mental and/ or substance use disorders.

This week sends a positive message that behavioral health is essential to overall health and that prevention works. According to SAMSHA three primary goals of NPW are to Involve communities in raising awareness about behavioral health issues and implementing prevention strategies; Foster partnerships and collaboration with federal agencies and national organizations dedicated to behavioral and public health; and Promote and disseminate quality behavioral health resources and publications. NPW is held each year during the third week of May—near the start of summer, an important time for school, communities, and prevention professionals to re-focus on prevention. Adolescents and full-time college students most often use substances for the first time during June or July, according to SAMHSA National Survey on Drug Use and Health. The timing of NPW provides an opportunity for schools and organizations to host prevention-themed events before the school year ends, raising awareness about this important issue among students and their families. These are key periods of social transitions, a risk factor for youth substance use, and an opportunity to develop or strengthen the community, school, and family bonds that protect young people from substance use.

In keeping with NPW, the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition is hosting prevention awareness events the entire month of May. On May 14<sup>th</sup>, the Coalition hosted a presentation by Mr. Kevin Alter, Recovery Speaker and author of the Blog The Addict's Diary at Ciudad de Refugio in Glen Cove to learn his poignant story of opioid addiction, its negative effects on his family and the long road to recovery.

Additional prevention awareness activities include a presentation by the National Guard Counter Drug Task Force on the dangers of vaping (May 14<sup>th</sup>) Shed Your Med's disposal program with the Mayor's office Police Department and EMS (May 18<sup>th</sup>) and a Power Point presentation

conducted by Mr. Steve Chassman, LCSW, CASAC, Executive Director of the Long Island Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (LICADD) who will discuss the current state of the nation's opioid epidemic, the potential impact of the legalization of marijuana, and vaping- the latest identified trend in youth substance use (May 22<sup>nd</sup>).

The month of May will conclude at the Glen Cove Middle School with World No Tobacco Day- a collaboration between SAFE, the Tobacco Action Coalition of Long Island and Glen Cove School health education teachers for an engaging program in recognition of World No Tobacco Day. Middle school students will be educated on the dangers of tobacco products and the marketing tactics the tobacco lobby use at local retailers. The youth will participate in an interactive learning program and will be taught life skills in advocacy to take a stand against "Big Tobacco." This event initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO) encourages a 24-hour period of abstinence from all forms of tobacco consumption around the world. (May 20<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>).

For more information on how to get involved visit SAMHSA please visit <http://www.samhsa.gov/preventionweek/about>. For more information about LICADD please visit [www.licadd.org](http://www.licadd.org). To learn about the TAC please visit [www.breathefreely.org](http://www.breathefreely.org). For further information on SAFE, the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition and their initiatives please visit [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org) or follow us on: [www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition](http://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition).