

## **Press Release**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **SAFE and TAC ask the Public to Support Earth Day**

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition in their continuing efforts to develop and implement sustainable environmental strategies has partnered with Carol Meschkow, Nassau Manager of the Tobacco Action Coalition (TAC) of Long Island to bring attention to the dangers of second hand smoke and cigarette litter in honor of Earth Day. The mission of the Coalition is to eliminate alcohol, tobacco and substance abuse in Glen Cove. The Coalition is aware of the community's needs through its ongoing collaborative efforts.

Earth Day, traditionally since its inception focuses annually on bringing to the forefront a broad range of environmental issues such as pollution, renewable energy, green schools, etc. to motivate people to take personal and collaborative efforts to address them. Over the last several years, our collaboration with TAC in advancing the City of Glen Cove as a tobacco free community has been very effective in garnering the support of local government and community organizations in creating tobacco free zones.

Second hand smoke has been declared as a Class A carcinogen according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, placing it in the same category as asbestos, radon and benzene. The Surgeon General has gone on to declare there is no safe level of second hand smoke. Not only is the public endangered by second hand smoke; but tobacco litter is poisonous and puts our children, pets and wild life at risk. Our playgrounds, beaches, public walk ways and entryways should not be subjected to cigarette butts which often end up in playgrounds, on beaches and stormdrains, that ultimately find their way into our groundwater and oceans.

Cigarette butts take approximately 15 years to decompose. Per Ms. Meschkow, "within an hour of contact with water, cigarettes can begin leaching chemicals such as arsenic, lead and cadmium into the marine environment. These butts which contain cellulose acetate fibers have been found in the stomachs of fish, birds and other marine animals leading to ingestion and digestive blockages. Butt litter if not properly extinguished causes fires, and sadly there are reports of thousands of children to the American Poison Control Center annually who have been poisoned by ingesting cigarette butts".

“Children have smaller lungs than adults and as a result breathe in 50% more air pollution. They are more susceptible to second hand smoke even if outdoors” said Dr. Sharon Harris, Executive Director of SAFE, Inc. and Co-Chair of the Coalition. Further, “tobacco use in family friendly places, public venues, and recreational amenities is dangerous and models smoking as an acceptable norm”.

Both the Coalition and TAC strive to change the social norms of the acceptability of tobacco use in an effort to protect our youth from engaging in this addictive dangerous habit.

For Earth Day, we are calling on the public to apprise friends, and loved ones who smoke, and our influential leaders to ban together in changing these norms by advancing tobacco free zones to protect our children and wildlife from this environmental pollutant.

For more information about SAFE, Inc. and the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition visit the website at <http://www.safeglencove.org> or our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition> or call 516-676-2008. For more information about TAC on quitting and the dangers of tobacco use visit [www.tobaccofreenystate.org](http://www.tobaccofreenystate.org).