Last week I had the opportunity to attend the Citizens Against Teen Suicide (CATS) Bully Abuse Forum held at Baywinde Senior Living. My overall awareness and understanding of the growing problem of bullying and cyber-bullying was raised 100%. This forum was a “call to action” for families and community members to make us aware of this frightening abuse problem, and more importantly, it challenged us to make a difference.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Sam McQuade from RIT. Dr. McQuade teaches and conducts research in areas that include computer crime, enterprise security, and career options in high-tech societies. In 2008 he conducted a massive ‘cybercrime victimization and offending’ survey of more than 40,000 local K-12 students and hundreds of parents and teachers. The survey revealed new understanding of ways in which youth behave and interact online as well as how computerized systems and devices are abused.

New York is one of only a handful of states that does not have a law against cyber bulling. State Senator Mike Nozzolio, chairman of the Senate Crime Victims, Crime and Corrections Committee, was on hand to speak about his efforts to correct this serious omission. Addressing this very serious problem is not only an issue for CATS, our schools, the State Senate, law enforcement, counseling centers or other institutes and ministries—it is an issue deserving the attention of our entire community, and we can and must make a difference.

I encourage everyone to visit the CATS website at www.citizensagainstteensuicide.com to learn more. Ray Antocicco is the Executive Director and a former educator who has committed himself to raising awareness and making a difference…we all must raise our knowledge about bullying and then be willing to do something more than sit on the sidelines and watch the destructive choices bullying fosters…bullying in any form is unacceptable!

The second round of the “Great Penfield Spring Cleanup” was a huge success. More than 1,300 pounds of debris was picked up from our roadways, trails and parks. Three truckloads of electronics were collected for recycling and kept out of landfills. I will have a total weight for that material in the next few weeks. And our confidential document destruction was so successful that we filled two trucks, collected more than 15,000 pounds of paper, and unfortunately had to turn some residents away as there was no more room. If you happened to be one of those residents, please contact my office at 340-8630 and we will make arrangements to take the materials at the Town Hall and combine it in our secure totes that are emptied each week.

The last and final round of the “Great Penfield Spring Cleanup” is May 10-12. This features spring drop-off at the Highway Garage, 1607 Jackson Road. The event will run Thursday and Friday, 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. and Saturday, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Accepted household items include furniture, appliances, tires (limit four), vehicle batteries, and brush. Common sense is appreciated. We cannot accept TVs, computers, monitors, propane tanks, leaves and grass clippings, hazardous materials, gas and oil, paint or driveway sealer. You must be a resident of Penfield to participate; please bring a form of identification showing proof of residency.

We continue to see a number of people allowing their dogs off leash in town parks and had several recent close calls with dog attacks. Penfield does have a leash law and it is enforced by our Animal Control officers. I have asked the Sheriff’s Department to support our officers during times when dog owners want to bully Animal Control. Bullying is unacceptable behavior and it will be addressed by law enforcement. Thank you in advance for keeping your pets leashed!

The Shepherd Home will hold its annual plant sale Friday, May 18, 4:00-6:00 p.m., Saturday, May 19, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. and Sunday, May 20 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. This sale will be held at the Shepherd Home, 1959 Five Mile Line Road.

May is “Building Safety Month” to raise awareness of the importance of building safety, green and sustainable building, pool, spa and hot tub safety, and new technologies in the construction industry. Building Safety Month encourages everyone to take appropriate steps to ensure the places where we live, learn, work, worship and play are safe and sustainable. Countless lives have been saved due to the implementation of safety codes by local and state agencies.

Until next week, be well and be safe!

Tony
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