

Innovative Program At MHS For College-Bound Seniors

Administration, faculty, CASA, and the SCA promote 'harm reduction'

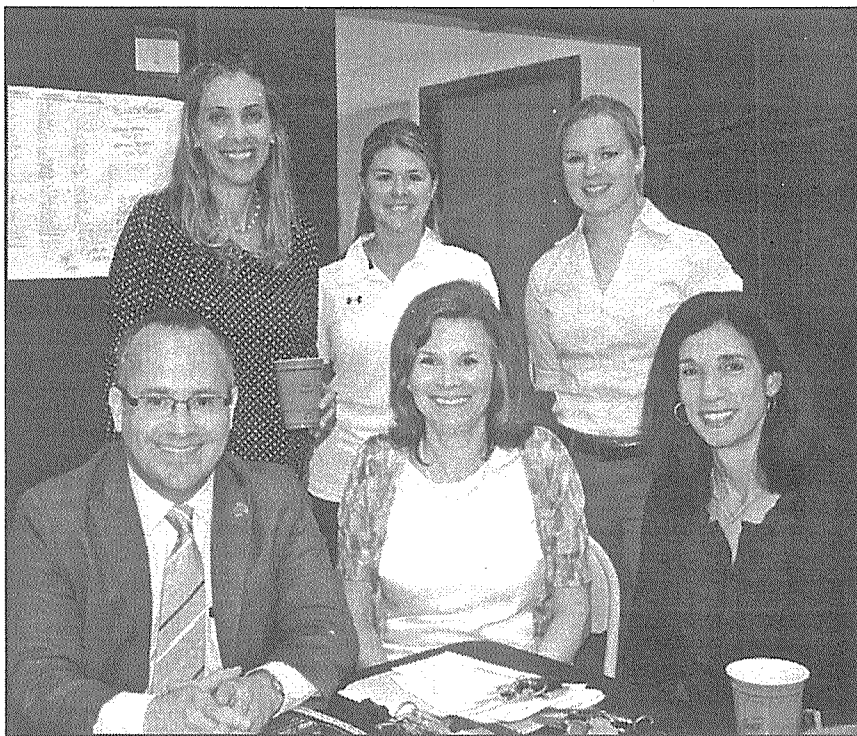
By PAT GRACE
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A concerned resident sent the *Manhasset Press* a photo taken in Plandome at the corner of Westgate Boulevard and Plandome Road of Smirnoff Vodka bottles tossed onto the grass, asking, "Do parents know where their kids are? Who they're with? What they're doing? Do they care?"

Coalition Against Substance Abuse (CASA) cares and has maintained a presence in Manhasset for a long time, often ignored, some might observe.

Lisbeth Shibley, CASA executive director, indicated CASA has always been focused on prevention but another element in the spectrum is harm reduction—focused on the 18 to 24-year-old age group that has the highest rate of binge drinking.

On May 22 and May 24 Shibley explained that all 219 seniors had been scheduled for AED and CPR training in the school gym (groups of 50), which includes Heartsaver CPR/AED certification and, immediately following, 1.5 hours of alcohol emergency training



Standing: Lisbeth Shibley, executive director CASA; Farran Funfgeld, physical education teacher for grades 10-12; Lauren Majewski, 10th grade health teacher. **Sitting:** Principal Dean Schlanger; Cathy Samuels, project director, Manhasset Community Coalition Against Substance Abuse, and Lisa Belinsky, president, Manhasset High School SCA.

led by EMT responders and qualified faculty presenters. Full participation in the program counted toward two physical education classes. At the end of the training, each student was asked to fill out a questionnaire to assess the value of the program. In addition, with student consent, they will be contacted at some point in the future after graduation to reassess the usefulness of the Red Watch Band certification.

The Red Watch Band harm reduction training began at Stony Brook University where, Shibley explained, a woman's son drank too much, fell asleep on his back and died. No one knew how to help him. "There is always," Shibley said, "a personal connection." While this model has not usually been done in high school, she said, seniors will be moving on to college and it is a good time to teach them. The program, hopefully, will help students understand the importance of recognizing alcohol overdose as a medical emergency, Shibley continued, and thus provide the knowledge, skill and confidence to help prevent a tragedy.

Shibley acknowledged the district administration, faculty, CASA, and the SCA made the coordination and implementation of the program possible and that the Robbie Levine Foundation, through its "Teens for Life" initiative, provided the CPR/AED certification component for every participant.

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Fifth Annual Hugs Picnic

By PAT GRACE
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Maria Vacharis, Hugs Across America board member and co-chair of the June 2 event with Michele Longobardi, surveyed the room with approval. It was chaotic. Giant bears, as well as bears of every other size were piled everywhere and any unused space teemed with children. The excitement and noise level grew in tandem. Pizza, bubbles, arts and crafts, games, DJ, face painting were all part of the blurred boundaries of planned activities. And there were several tables laden with gift baskets donated by local sponsors to be raffled at a quieter moment.

Outdoors on the church grounds a Plandome Fire Truck was parked for inspection by the curious. The firemen also provided a bouncy castle for the tots.

Sue Lucarelli, Hugs founder, said the event, begun five years ago, has grown each year, and the children seem to love it.

"It's our gift to the community and the community's gift to children in crisis." The entry fee is \$5 per adult and that buys one teddy bear for a lost or anxious child in a traumatic circumstance. The adults, Lucarelli indicated, are delighted to have the opportunity to give a gesture of hope to a needy child.

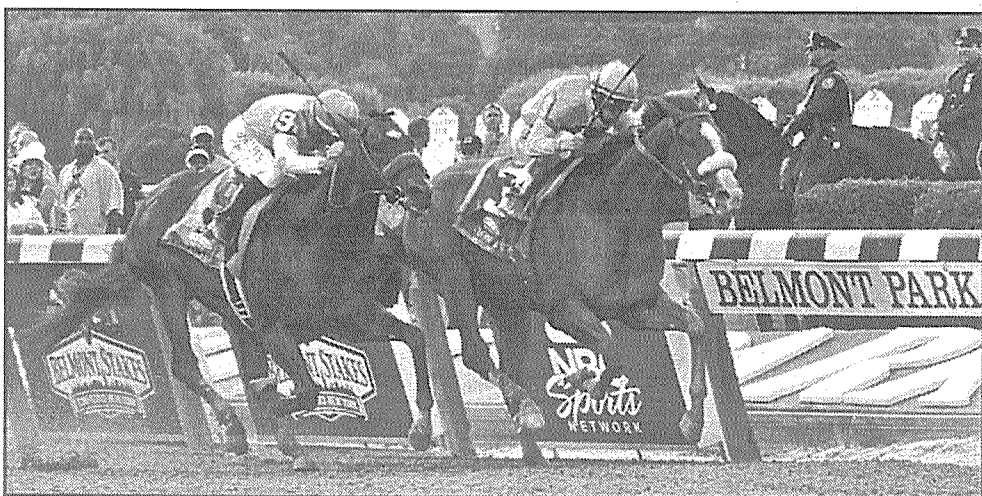
Sue Lucarelli was a teacher at the Churchill School in NYC during the attacks on the Twin Towers on Sept. 11, 2001 and while in lockdown, she said, she got the idea for her book, *T. Bears Tale—Hugs Across America*. Some of her students had parents in the Towers and one approached her saying, "All I know is, I need a hug." Lucarelli hugged him and gave him one of three teddy bears she had in the classroom. But all the children wanted one, so she told them if they'd share, the next day she would bring them one of their own. "We distributed 58,000 teddy bears to the kids in NYC," Lucarelli said.

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Several Hugs Across America board members pose against a backdrop of raffle baskets: Francesca Runge, Michele Longobardi, Susan Trocchia, Sue Lucarelli, Karen Spitz and Maria Vacharis.
Photo by Pat Grace

Union Rags Turns To Riches At 144th Belmont Stakes



Union Rags (3, on right) and Paynter battle it out just before the finish line at the Belmont Stakes.
Photo by Dan Heary

With I'll Have Another scratched, another notch set into Affirmed's belt as last Triple Crown winner

By RICH FORESTANO
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What's in a name? Or perhaps two names? For jockey John Velazquez, it's two big wins at the Belmont Stakes in the last five years with the West Hempstead resident atop Union Rags in 2012, edging out Paynter by a neck on Saturday, June 9. Atigun came in to show.

The 126 pound jockey said it was an unbelievable race, even though the win

didn't come with spoiling history. I'll Have Another was scratched one day before a chance to push Affirmed aside in the history books as the last to win all three jewels of the Triple Crown. The horse became the second since 1936 to win the first two legs, only to be unable to compete in the "Test of Champions."

Velazquez credited the hard-luck colt with the victory. The horse switched jockeys from the Derby with Julien Leparoux to Velazquez, who will be inducted into the Hall of Fame in August. Leparoux rode Atigun.

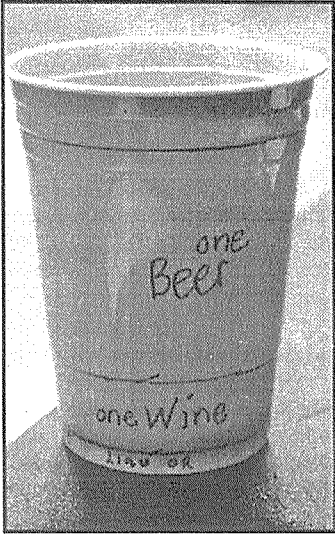
"I waited for a hole to open up and I got lucky," said Velazquez, who won the 2007 Belmont with filly Rags to Riches. "The horse did it all."

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Secondary School Principal Dean Schlanger said the Red Watch Band program "is a wonderful resource to our students. We are most grateful and appreciative to the Robbie Levine foundation for this initiative. The foundation donated the trainer and all the equip-



Visual to identify how little liquor is considered a "shot." Bottom line would be the amount considered a shot in one drink containing hard liquor; second line is wine and third is what is considered one beer. Visually students can see "one" of their drinks containing hard liquor is really equal to many more than that.

ment—it would have cost \$10,000 from the Red Cross."

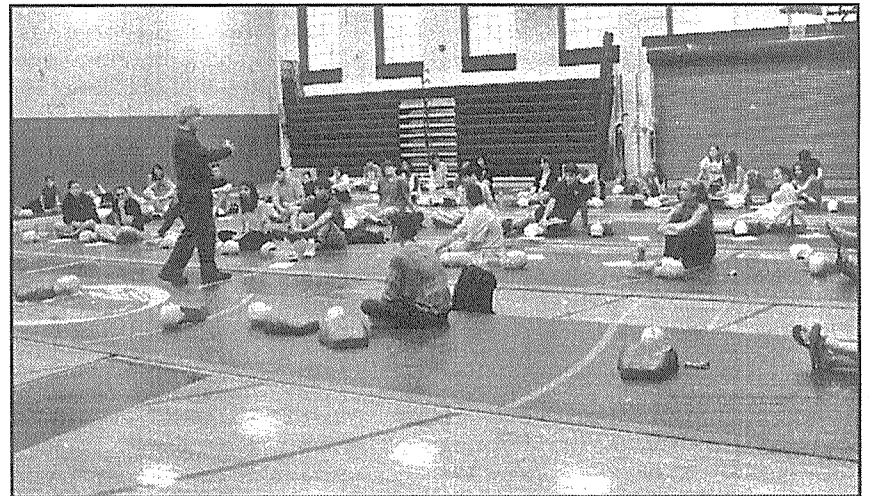
Founded at Stony Brook University, the goal of the Red Watch Band program is to ensure that all students are armed with accurate information about the dangers of alcohol use and know when, where, and how to get help when every second counts.

In promoting this innovative harm prevention program Shibley explained that, "This program is not just about making students believe that it is their responsibility to 'save' the drunken student from themselves, it's also about empowering students and allowing them to recognize their ability to shape their community before things get out of hand. It's not just about calling 911 after finding a semi-conscious peer, it's also about intervening before it gets to that point - to switch to water - or stepping in when someone becomes sexually aggressive toward another person that isn't in the right state to consent. It's about," she added, "caring about the people around you and being responsible for each other." Lisa Belinsky, president, Manhasset High School SCA said, "Part of the SCA mission is to educate and communicate with our parents and students. This topic is just crucial for seniors going off to college. We're happy to be part of this innovative program."

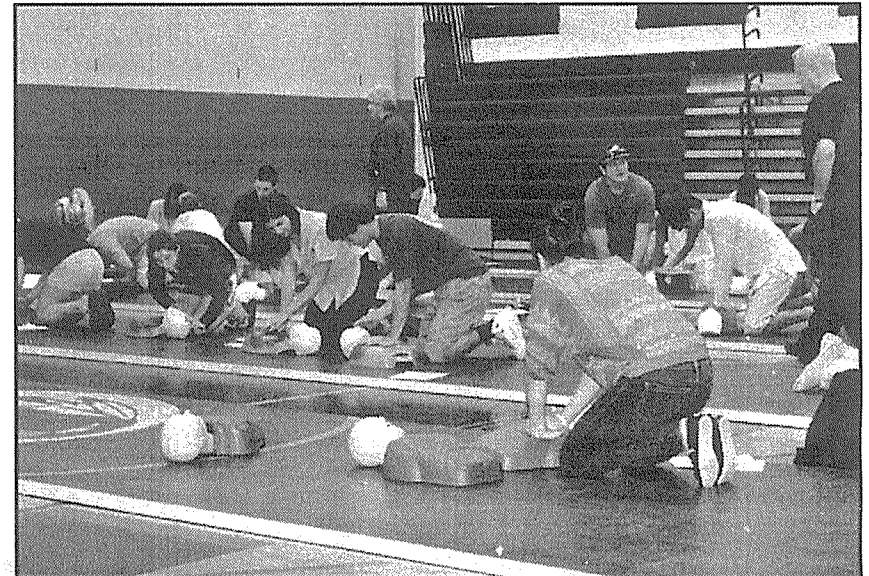
A feature of the program at Manhasset was the use of in house facilitators, specifically Lauren Majewski, 10th grade health teacher, and Farran Funfgeld, physical education in grades 10-12. Shibley informed them that statistically, the kids are combining drinking with pot and pills like never before and that the curriculum provided is a great basis for discussion. Shibley also equipped them with red solo cups marked with the equivalent of one serving of hard liquor, wine and beer as a visual for the facilitators to make their point about just how much one serving really is—in a recognizable container.

The teachers themselves are 25 and 26 years old—the students can easily relate to them. Funfgeld said it is "a great opportunity to have seniors express any concerns and issues they may have at the alcohol awareness training." Majewski believes it is "really good to equip seniors entering the next part of their life, and realistically may be in a position where they will need this."

Cathy Samuels, project director, Manhasset Community Coalition Against Substance Abuse, stated the harm reduction program empowers students to change the college environment. "College doesn't have to be, and shouldn't be, about alcohol."



Student instruction for CPR/AED certification was provided by the Robbie Levine Foundation, through its "Teens for Life" initiative.



Students practice to get it right.

Photos by Pat Grace

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