

# 'Talk. They Hear You' Campaign

By MANHASSET PRESS STAFF

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Manhasset CASA's sector meeting kicked off with a proclamation from the Town of North Hempstead for its "Talk. They Hear You." campaign. The ongoing underage drinking prevention initiative seeks to empower families to talk with their children—as young as age 9—about the risks of underage drinking. The proclamation also marked a town-wide day of special recognition for the prevention of underage drinking in our communities.

"CASA is a wonderful resource for parents, who are sometimes unsure of how to approach the subject of drinking with their children," said Anna Kaplan, North Hempstead Councilwoman District 4. "This gives parents the support and information they need in order to have those important discussions."

The meeting was one of four held this year as part of CASA's Drug Free Communities Grant Program and was dedicated to administering a community assessment facilitated by the U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Dave You of the New York City Counter-drug Task Force.

The Community Kaizen, or



Left to right: Kristin Mulholland, Shelter Rock School SCA president; Cathy Samuels, Manhasset CASA project director; Andrew Lunetta, Manhasset CASA board member; Anna M. Kaplan, North Hempstead councilwoman; Judi Bosworth, North Hempstead supervisor; Lisa Belinsky, Manhasset CASA executive director; Eugene Petracca, Jr., Manhasset CASA board president; Barbara Donno, Mayor of Plandome Manor; and Liz Tomaselli, Munsey Park School SCA president.

community assessment survey, queried CASA sector members, who electronically recorded their answers with hand-held devices. The results will be presented at CASA's Oct. 2 meeting and incorporated in its strategic plan.

The "Talk. They Hear You." campaign notes that as children approach their teen years, they begin to experience many emotional and physical changes—changes that are not always easy—and some children

may experiment with alcohol. For most children, it is not just one thing that influences them to drink, but a combination of factors.

However, parents can encourage healthy decision-making during the following problems often encountered by adolescents:

**Stress:** When children worry about things like grades, fitting in, and physical appearance, they may use alcohol as a way to escape their problems.

**What Can Parents Do?** Encourage

children to get involved in sports or other extracurricular activities as a healthier way to cope with his or her problems.

**Peer Pressure:** The age range between 11 and 18 is an impressionable period when youth are especially susceptible to outside influences such as peers, family members, and the media.

**What Can Parents Do?** Help boost children's confidence by helping him or her learn different ways to say "no" and reminding him or her that real friends do not pressure him or her to drink.

**Transitions:** Life events such as transitioning from middle school to high school, breaking up with a significant other, moving, or divorce can cause children to turn to alcohol.

**What Can Parents Do?** Reassure children that things will get easier, and make sure he or she knows that drinking is not a solution.

**Environment:** If children grow up in an environment where parents or peers drink a lot and/or view drinking favorably, they may be more likely to drink themselves.

**What Can Parents Do?** If parents choose to drink, set a good example by drinking in moderation, and make sure children know that underage drinking is not acceptable.



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