

...over the 2010 winners of the annual poster contest sponsored by the Manhasset Chamber of Commerce, organized by Nancy Morris, State Farm Agency. First, second and third place winners are selected by grade and announced at the Annual Christmas Tree Lighting each year—scheduled for 4 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 3 at the Mary Jane Davies Park. Refreshments are served and Santa will make an appearance.

## 'Lock Your Meds' Public Awareness Campaign

Alarmed about the increase in prescription drug abuse among young adults and the heroin epidemic on Long Island, Supervisor Jon Kaiman and the North Hempstead Town Board hosted Nassau County's first pharmaceutical take-back program.

Recently, the supervisor and the town board ramped up efforts to combat this troubling trend, adding their voices to a national public awareness campaign—"Lock Your Meds: Be Aware. Don't Share." The centerpiece of the campaign's local component was a pharmaceutical take back event at Manhasset High School.

"We are proud to be part of this important campaign whose mission is to educate our community to the fact that when prescription drugs are used improperly they are dangerous and life threatening," Supervisor Kaiman said.

The take-back event held Saturday Oct. 23 at Manhasset High School yielded an estimated 360 pounds of outdated and unwanted pharmaceuticals, 50 pounds of which were narcotics.

According to the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, nearly one in five teens has used prescription medication—pain relievers such as Vicodin and OxyContin and stimulants like Ritalin and Adderall—to get high and one

in 10 report abusing cough medicine.

Health experts say prescription and over-the-counter drug abuse is the fastest growing drug problem in America, ranking only behind alcohol and marijuana as the most abused substance.

As well as North Hempstead, the partnership—headed by the Manhasset Coalition Against Substance Abuse (CASA)—includes Manhasset Public Schools, Manhasset School Community Association and the Nassau County Police Department.

Recognizing that parents, caregivers and all residents are in a unique position to reduce teen access to prescription drugs because they are found in the home, Manhasset CASA joined the National Family Partnership's "Lock Your Meds: Be Aware. Don't Share" public awareness campaign.

Cathy Samuels, project director of Manhasset CASA said, often, young people underestimate the dangers of misusing prescription medicines, which some experts contend is a "gateway" to other illegal drugs like heroin.

"Parents have to understand that for many teens, prescription drugs appear to be a 'medically safe high' because in their minds, these medicines were prescribed by a doctor," Samuels said.



Members of the Nassau County Police Department were on hand to help collect unwanted pharmaceuticals at the North Hempstead/CASA take-back event.