

A vacant building at 2143 and 2147 Eastern Parkway, just across from Congregation Gates of Heaven, once housed a physician's office. That physician moved to the new Albany Medical Center building on Union Street, which Lecce developed, so the Lecce Group

Under town regulations, that project would require a special-use permit from the Town Board and site plan approval from the Planning Board.

OTHER PROJECTS

The intersection of Balltown

The Lecce Group has also submitted plans to build two homes at the intersection of Pearse Road and Whitney Drive. A home on the one-acre site would be demolished to make way for the two new homes, according to the proposal. Town officials noted there have

to consider things like access to affordable housing in Niskayuna. Mahar said the proposed apartments fit well with the neighborhoods for which they're planned.

"The Upper Union Street corridor is walkable and close to so many amenities," Mahar said. "If

approval process to take months to a year, or more, depending on the complexity of the project and the type of approvals it needs.

It is also common for proposals to undergo a number of drafts or revisions before gaining final approval.

High school clubs gear up to discourage bad decisions

BY KRISTIN SCHULTZ

Gazette Reporter

NISKAYUNA — Making good choices is not always easy for high school students. But some students at Niskayuna High School have found strength in numbers.

Middle and high school students are bombarded by peer pressure to use and abuse substances, belittle others and take on classes and activities that can lead to unhealthy stress levels.

At the end of July, Niskayuna senior Meghna Tetambe attended a regional Youth to Youth Conference at Bryant University in Smithfield, Rhode Island, with N-CAP youth coordinator Cassandra Lee.

"I liked how everyone came together and committed to be drug-free," said Tetambe.

Over the course of the weekend,

Tetambe and Lee listened to nationally recognized speakers including Cara Filler, founder of the iSPOKE UP campaign, which encourages teens to speak out and stand up for the right thing even if the right thing is unpopular.

Tetambe said Filler talked about speaking up when friends make bad decisions, such as driving too fast.

Lee enjoyed the speakers who addressed issues of stereotypes, challenging the audience to assess their own biases and to have empathy.

The conference aimed to bring student-leaders together to learn and encourage one another, and have fun in a drug-free environment. As the school year looms large, members of SAPE and BASE, high school clubs sponsored by N-CAP, are gearing up for a full slate of community outreach programs aimed at

helping students make good decisions.

"It's important to talk with people and create awareness," said Tetambe. "Kids start [using drugs and alcohol] really early these days. They start in middle school."

In 2016, N-CAP released the results of its student survey in which students in middle and high school reported their own use of drugs and alcohol. In general, alcohol and marijuana were the most-used substances, with use outpacing the national average at the high school level.

"People know it's bad but try it anyway and get addicted," said BASE member Aryia Dattamajumdar.

"The student survey was eye-opening. One time is enough to get addicted," said fellow BASE member and sophomore Samhita Kodura.

Instead of turning to drugs or alcohol

to deal with stress, SAPE and BASE want the community to know that students can have fun without substances. Tetambe, Dattamajumdar and Kodura all learn and perform traditional Indian dance.

"I want to be a good role model for my neighbors," said Tetambe. "It's important to set a good standard and be a good role model."

In addition to setting a good example for younger siblings and neighbors, the students want to engage the whole community in awareness and prevention. BASE plans to host drug scavenger hunt, post billboards and host community conversations about healthy choices.

For more information about BASE and SAPE, contact Meghna Tetambe at meghnatetambe412@gmail.com or Cassandra Lee at cassandralee@ncapnisky.org.