

Angels spread wings

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By JENNY LING

Wherever there's crime, we'll be there.

That's the message from Guardian Angels vowing to help police crack crime on central Auckland streets.

"We're open to suggestions," national spokesman Andy Cawston says.

"Wherever people don't feel safe, that's where we will go."

Mr Cawston says the organisation decided to boost its presence after reading about a string of muggings in the Central Leader.

Before charging five people with offences in Balmoral and Mt Roskill police warned people not to go out at night.

"The week the article came out I met a couple in Avondale who told me about the crime problem there," Mr Cawston says.

"So you've got these people saying this and the police are saying don't go out at night - I thought there is a need."

The Guardian Angels are unarmed volunteers who try to defuse trouble on the streets.

The Avondale group was launched last Friday a number of volunteers scouring the streets for disorder.

There are also chapters in Waitakere city and south Auckland.

Mr Cawston says the Avondale group is willing to spread its wings.

"If we receive inquiries from the likes of Balmoral, Pt Chevalier, Ponsonby and Western Springs we'll look at patrolling their neighbourhoods too."

Police inspector Jim Wilson says he had a positive meeting with Mr Cawston this week.

"An extra set of eyes and ears will be most welcome and they'll be able to pass on their observations to police.

"There will be some things we can work through together. There's certainly room to advance things."

Mr Cawston's introduction to crimefighting came in 2004 when a P lab was uncovered near his west Auckland home.

The incident reminded him of a 20-year-old TV programme that profiled a New York-based volunteer group called Guardian Angels.

"I came to the realisation that private citizens also have a role to play and a responsibility to contribute to the outcomes in our societies," he says.

"Our main mission is community outreach, intervening with people at risk, streetkids, the homeless and people who would go off the rails if they didn't get a nudge in the right direction," he says.

The Guardian Angels will do a second patrol of Avondale on Wednesday.

Central Leader

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