

Carver Terrace gets its own Angels



Courtney Mabeus, The Examiner
Jan 23, 2007 3:00 AM (1 day ago)

WASHINGTON -

After four shooting deaths in Carver Terrace since October, a national community empowerment organization is joining forces with residents of the Northeast neighborhood in an attempt to take back their streets.

(Guardian Angels)

Guardian Angels (like the ones shown above) can now be seen patrolling the streets of Carver Terrace.

On given night patrols and during weekend walks, Guardian Angels can be seen in the public housing project located along Maryland Avenue between 19th and 21st streets. They also can be heard, the group's mid-Atlantic director John Ayala said Monday, singing the phrase, "Guns down. Peace up."

Former Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner Kathy Henderson, who left office earlier this month, said she contacted the organization in December.

Henderson said the Angels have brought some hope to the community, which has seen the Jan. 6 murder of a 17-year-old just blocks away from where his own father had been murdered years earlier. A week later, a 10-year-old girl watched as her father, a contractor working in the area, was shot nine times by a group of men after he asked them to get away from his car. The man survived the attack and has been released from the hospital, Henderson said.

"It's not just garden-variety crime, it's violent crime," Henderson said.

Guardian Angel volunteers took their first weekly walk Jan. 10. Volunteers also patrol the area with police scanners to help deter crime, Ayala said. So far, 14 neighborhood boys have been recruited to help and six have participated. The Angels offer job, mediation and martial arts training to youths.

Henderson said the Angels have been responsive at a time when her community has been ignored by public officials.

"No one can afford to be absent when it comes to advocating for public safety," Henderson said.

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