



## Staten Island Advance

### Island's Guardian Angels already deliver

D.A. lauds safety patrol as Curtis Sliwa promises an expanded role here

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By **JOHN ANNESE**  
**STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE**

STATEN ISLAND, N.Y. -- Rolla, Night Crawler and the Cat Lady have been patrolling the streets of Staten Island for only a few months now, and already they've helped put a suspected wallet-snatcher in handcuffs.

They're all members of the Guardian Angels, Curtis Sliwa's band of red beret- and jacket-wearing civilian safety patrollers, who returned to Staten Island in October.

The trio -- real names Steve Carrington, 26, of South Beach, and Richard Ortiz, 26, and Barbara Sullivan, 54, both Mariners Harbor -- received praise yesterday from District Attorney Daniel Donovan for chasing a teen-age theft suspect into the waiting hands of cops in December.

"We're grateful for their participation," Donovan said yesterday. "Their first response is, they want to get the police involved."

All three were on patrol at the bus stop at Bay Street and Stuyvesant Place in St. George on Dec. 13, when Emmanuel Adegbeh, 16, allegedly grabbed a 15-year-old boy's wallet as he took out his MetroCard.

"I heard, 'Grab that kid!'" Carrington said.

So the three gave chase, cornering Adegbeh on Central Avenue, where officers from the North Shore's 120th Precinct were waiting, they said.

Adegbeh was charged with grand larceny and possession of stolen property. After spending five days in jail on \$1,000 bail, he was released on his own recognizance, and awaits an April 9 court appearance.

Sliwa said yesterday that the Angels, who had a presence on the Island in the 1980s, have returned because of rising complaints of gang activity.

"Gang problems exist here, as in every part of the community," Sliwa said, adding that he wants to pay particular attention to Jersey Street, which cuts through New Brighton and Tompkinsville.

The Guardian Angels cover areas in both the North Shore's 120th and Mid-Island's 122nd precincts, and are starting to patrol city housing as well, Sliwa said. Members patrol during the day, keeping an eye on high school dismissals, roving the St. George Ferry Terminal and riding the Staten Island Railway.

"We've now expanded all the way into the Mall," Sliwa said.

Sliwa, who hosts a morning radio show, founded the volunteer foot patrol in 1979. Charges of vigilantism in the early years have largely subsided, and the brigade has become part of the urban landscape, although Sliwa has been accused of hyping its numbers and presence. The group offers neighborhood watches and cleanups, free martial arts, first aid and CPR training.

Ortiz -- who takes his Night Crawler nickname from the teleporting, acrobatic member of the X-Men -- has been a member of the Guardian Angels for six years.

"I always wanted to join when I was a kid," said Ortiz, who used to live in Manhattan and the Bronx. "Everywhere I went, I walked the street coming home from school, I'd see guys beating up their wives or selling drugs on my block."

Ms. Sullivan, a.k.a. Cat Lady, who grew up in Mariners Harbor, echoed that sentiment, saying she had

been waiting for the Guardian Angels to come to her home turf.

"It seems like all the other boroughs get new things. All the other boroughs get Guardian Angels," she said.

So far, the Staten Island patrollers have been in a few dicey situations, including a confrontation with a possibly drug-addled man who sought them out to yell at them and call them "rats," then threw a garbage can into the path of oncoming traffic.

Ortiz said he has taken all sorts of verbal abuse while on patrol, both from Adegbehr's friends and from people who don't like the Guardian Angels' mission.

"Whatever curse they could think of on the street comes out of their mouth," Ortiz said, adding, "To me, it's all mouth. As long as they don't touch me, I stay quiet."

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