



## The Republican.

### Guardian Angels returning to area

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By **PATRICK JOHNSON**  
pjohanson@repub.com

SPRINGFIELD - The Guardian Angels public safety organization intends to re-establish a Springfield chapter after a 20-year absence later this month and hopes to have volunteers patrolling city streets by September.

Chapter organizer Arnaldo A. "Thirteen" Salinas, of New York City, said the goal is to have the first batch of local recruits in place and properly trained in basic first aid and security skills by the fall.

The volunteer crime-fighting group attempts to act as a visual deterrent to crime by their presence alone. Initially, he expects the chapter to have patrols one night a week, and to increase to more nights as new recruits step forward.

Springfield will be the chapter's nucleus, but he said he envisions the chapter expanding to Holyoke.

Salinas helped launch the first Springfield chapter in 1980, an effort that disbanded after about five years.

He said so far about 10 people have expressed interest in being volunteers, a number that he expects to grow as word of the chapter spreads and the first members begin patrolling the streets in their trademark red berets.

Anyone 16 years or older, who is in good physical condition and has no serious criminal offenses is eligible to join, he said. People younger than 18 need parental consent, and the organization seeks to verify criminal records with the police, he said. Recruits undergo about three months of training.

Salinas is known by the nickname "Thirteen," because he was one of the original 13 Guardian Angels who began patrols in New York City in the 1970s.

He and Guardian Angels founder Curtis Sliwa are the last two remaining original members.

For more information about joining, call Salinas at (616) 232-4643.

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