

## Guardian Angels praised in No. 7 teen arrests

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By Matthew Monks

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**They're faster than a speeding bully and can jump a subway turnstile in a single bound. They're the Guardian Angels, and state Assemblyman Jose Peralta (D-Jackson Heights) praised them Friday for cleaning up crime in Corona.**

The vigilantes famous for cracking down on subway crime in the '80s have been watching over the neighborhood since November, when Peralta called on them to battle rising gang activity.

Since then a crew of between 20 and 25 Angels has been patrolling the area, helping cops find hot spots and spearheading at least three arrests, he said.

Peralta awarded Angels citations Friday for chasing down three teens charged with a robbery spree on the No. 7 train and for evacuating a burning building.

"This is why we brought the Guardian Angels here," Peralta said in their Corona headquarters on 103rd Street. "Today I am so proud to be surrounded by red jackets and red berets," he said, referring to the Angels' uniforms.

Five Angels were on the No. 7 train April 17 when some teenagers allegedly mugged a Middle Eastern man, robbing him of his credit cards and an iPod, said Miguel Vazquez, a member of the squad. When the train stopped at 33rd Street in Long Island City, the Angels chased them out of the stop and pinned them against a building until the police came.

The suspects, Joel Nieves, 18, Fareed Hosein, 19 - both from Manhattan - and a 14-year-old boy were later charged with robbing 10 people on the No. 7 and No. 1 trains over three weeks in April, police said.

Earlier that same day, another patrol of Angels helped evacuate a burning building on 97th Avenue and 40th Road, Peralta said.

He brought the Angels to Corona to stem a rising tide of Latino gangs. Comprised of local volunteers, the Guardian Angels patrol area buildings 24 hours a day and escort people on the street late at night.

The assemblyman said they have pacified the area, and he plans to release figures soon to back up the claim. While the group focuses on Corona, Peralta said it has designs on fanning into Elmhurst eventually if it gets enough recruits.

The Angels, founded in the 1970s, is a worldwide crime-fighting organization. Its members carry no weapons and are trained in self-defense, citizens' rights and first aid. To join, recruits must be at least 16 years old and complete three months of training.