

Friday, 31 August 2007

Belly-dancing knight first female Guardian Angel

Anna Cruse has great credentials for helping people - she's a knight in shining armour and a guardian angel.

The Auckland city resident is the first woman to lead a New Zealand chapter of the Guardian Angels, volunteers who walk the streets to defuse trouble.

"We patrol areas where there's likely to be a cry for help. We do it rain or shine but preferably when it's shining," she says.

Ms Cruse is trained in medieval martial arts, a hobby that involves weaponry and the ancient world of knights.

And she teams her fighting skills with a less aggressive talent - belly dancing.

She says dancing helps with martial arts.

"It's great for exercise and the dancing poses help with your coordination."

Ms Cruse joined the Guardian Angels a year ago to help protect people in Auckland.

"I live in the city, and it's where my daughter and my friends hang out. So I believe that it is an honour to protect and guard our society.

"Interacting with the community in a positive way is a very powerful thing." Ms Cruse leads the patrols in the central city and west Auckland during weekends.

The Guardian Angels were founded in New York in 1979.

International leader Curtis Sliwa is visiting Auckland this week from the United States to meet members of the local branch, started by Andy Cawston.

He was introduced to crimefighting in 2004 when a P lab was uncovered near his west Auckland home.

Mr Cawston says Ms Cruse is a great leader for the organisation.

"There are not many females, as yet, leading our chapters worldwide, so in many ways she is a pioneer," he says.

"She is a fascinating person, aside from being a very capable leader."

Ms Cruse encourages more people to volunteer their time to protect the community.

"The more people you have doing it the more options you have for patrolling."

You may not copy, republish or distribute this page or the content from it without having obtained written permission from the copyright owner. To enquire about copyright clearances contact clearance@fairfaxnz.co.nz.