

# Guardian Angels will form Metro chapter

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## International group hopes to recruit local volunteers

**A1** BY ALAN COCHRANE  
TIMES & TRANSCRIPT STAFF

The Canadian director for the U.S.-based Guardian Angels says he will form a chapter in Metro Moncton, regardless of whether the group has the blessing of the city or the RCMP.

"If they are discouraging us, that means they are hiding something and we will go for it anyway," Scott Sonne said Friday, adding if there is enough interest, he would work with volunteers from Metro Moncton to set up a chapter here. The mandate of the chapter members would be walking patrols in an effort to prevent crime.

According to the official website, the Guardian Angels is an international volunteer group that provides public safety and education in the streets, schools and cyberspace. It was founded in 1979 by Curtis Sliwa, a radio announcer and activist from The Bronx, New York. Besides the neighbourhood patrols, the Guardian Angels offer anti-bullying programs for school children and Internet safety programs.

Dressed in a red windbreaker and matching red beret, the symbolic colours of the Guardian Angels, Sonne walked the streets of Downtown Moncton around noon Friday looking at so-called trouble spots. He was accompanied by a dark-haired man in a suit coat and sunglasses, who refused to identify himself or have his photo taken, and referred to Metro Moncton as "Codiac."

Sonne said the man was a "concerned citizen" who had approached the Guardian Angels and offered to show him around.

Sonne said he had received several e-mails from concerned residents of Metro Moncton saying they did not feel safe and asking the group to form a chapter here.

"There are people who don't feel safe at night in the downtown, despite what's being done by the police," Sonne said.

When asked for specific examples, he would not provide any. "Everybody knows at least one person who has had something happen to them. Moncton is a safe town, but people don't feel secure here."

That contention flies in the face of a recent CityThink poll conducted by Bristol Omnifacts on behalf of the Times Transcript. The poll showed that in 2006, 64 per cent felt strongly that Moncton, Dieppe and Riverview were safe communities. In 2008, that number jumped by more than 10 percentage points.

Moncton Mayor George LeBlanc said Friday he believes Metro Moncton is a very safe and secure community.

"Safety and security are quality of life issues and they are very important to me," said LeBlanc, who was elected mayor last month.

"You're always going to have issues, we're not perfect but on the whole we have a very safe and secure community."

He noted there were several other surveys and published articles describing Metro Moncton as one of the safest communities in Canada.

LeBlanc said the Guardian Angels have not requested a meeting with the city or officials of the Codiac Regional RCMP to explain their intentions or mandate. He noted the RCMP has a strong presence in Metro Moncton, which is augmented by Neighbourhood Watch, Crime Stoppers and regular patrols by cadets from the Oulton's College justice program.

But LeBlanc left the door open for discussion.

"I don't want to criticize (the Guardian Angels) because we have the same goal, which is a safe and secure community."

Cpl. Mike Gaudet said the Codiac Regional RCMP has not received any requests for meetings from the Guardian Angels and the group is not sanctioned by the RCMP. He said people who are concerned and want to help might be better off joining groups like Neighbourhood Watch or Crime Stoppers.

Dan Allain, executive-director of Downtown Moncton Centre-Ville also said he was not aware the city was being scouted by the Guardian Angels, but left the door open to meetings to discuss security issues with the volunteer group.

Sonne said the Guardian Angels are a volunteer group made up of concerned citizens from the areas. Their main function is to walk through trouble spots in an effort to dissuade criminal activity and help victims of crime. Volunteers do not receive any financial remuneration. They are trained in physical fitness, self-defence, first aid and the Criminal Code of Canada.

"They are concerned citizens, not police wannabes," Sonne said. "We want to be the eyes and ears for police and a positive role model to other people."

Sonne said he is originally from Toronto and has lived in Calgary and now Fredericton. He said he receives no funding from the Guardian Angels head office in New York and has helped set up chapters in other Canadian cities. Despite objections from the city, a chapter was set up in Halifax with only eight people -- five men and three women. The Toronto and Calgary chapters each have nine people. He said it is advantageous to have members from both genders.

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We can use all the resources available to us.

Yes we need them.

To The Guardian Angele

Welcome to Greater Moncton

What took you so long?

8 THUMBS UP 7 THUMBS DOWN

FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

**R. Paladin, Moncton** on 09/06/08, 6:27:58 AM ADT

Welcome!

5 THUMBS UP 3 THUMBS DOWN

FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

**Anonymous Reader** on 09/06/08, 8:55:44 AM ADT

Welcome Guadian Angels to Metro Moncton! As a concerned citizen I feel we can use all the resources available to us in keeping our city as safe as can be. As I recall in the not so far off past, there was discussion as to needing more RCMP to patrol our streets but finances were an issue. The Guardian Angels are a group of volunteers from our own city wanting to look out for all of our safety issues, so why wouldn't this be a good thing. Oh I guess because there would be no excuses then why our taxes keep soaring! Come on elected officials do the math and welcome the Guadian Angels into our communities.

5 THUMBS UP 1 THUMBS DOWN

FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

**S. Bourgeois, Moncton** on 09/06/08, 9:51:20 AM ADT

Sounds great, but I can't help but ask a few questions of my own...

1. Why wouldn't they seek the blessing of the city and RCMP, first? You would think that would be the courteous thing to do.
2. Where does Sonne draw his means of existence if he receives no funding from the US chapter?
3. Are the trainees criminally screened at all?
4. What if one of the volunteers gets roughed up during patrol? Is the city responsible for their safety?
5. Only nine members in Canada's largest city (Toronto - approx. 5 million in GTA)? If you do the math, that means Moncton and surrounding area should only need 0.004ths of a volunteer, or thereabout.

Why do they want to set up here?

5 THUMBS UP 4 THUMBS DOWN

FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

**Anonymous Reader** on 09/06/08, 11:18:44 AM ADT

I bet the neighbours around Moncton High will be happy to see them!

3 THUMBS UP 0 THUMBS DOWN

FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

**Anonymous Reader** on 09/06/08, 11:46:39 AM ADT

:  
Only nine members in Canada's largest city (Toronto - approx. 5 million in GTA)? If you do the math, that means Moncton and surrounding area should only need 0.004ths of a volunteer, or thereabout  
"

That statement alone reveals your mentality and that of some of Paid Officials.

A city is not run by just math alone, thank God.

Thet are here because people like myself asked them to come.  
All sensible questions will be answered in due time.

1 THUMBS UP 0 THUMBS DOWN

FLAG AS INAPPROPRIATE

**R. Paladin, Moncton** on 09/06/08, 5:23:50 PM ADT