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Guardian Angels to land in Yonkers

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YONKERS - Curtis Sliwa made a promise to Yonkers drug dealers yesterday: He's going to be their worst nightmare.

Sliwa, chief executive officer and co-founder of the Guardian Angels, said he is creating a chapter of the safety patrol group in some of the city's most beleaguered areas.

Sliwa met with police captains from the 3rd and 4th precincts yesterday to alert officers that the Angels' would be in the area and that police would be kept apprised of all of the group's activities.

He said the Angels plan to set up a headquarters on Saratoga Avenue and will patrol the areas of Saratoga, Lawrence Street, Buena Vista Avenue and Getty Square. Sliwa said those areas have had a lot of violent crime, including gang activity, in recent years. He said members of the Yonkers community asked for the Angels' help.

"We do essentially what a neighborhood watch group would do, but we take it to the next level. We take it up a notch," Sliwa, 54, said.

Yonkers police declined to comment on the meeting.

Sliwa characterized the meeting as positive and said police "pledged cooperation."

The Guardian Angels is a nationwide organization of volunteers who, without weapons, patrol more dangerous or drug-ridden areas of a community from "dusk until dawn," according to the group's Web site. The group was founded in 1979 in New York City.

The Angels also attend community events and gatherings to deter criminal elements. Without weapons, the Angels rely on their presence to be a deterrent. But when that doesn't work, they make citizen's arrests and may physically restrain a person.

"The idea is to keep (drug dealers) moving," Sliwa said. "They're not going to go out and get jobs at a Mickey D's flipping burgers and making strawberry shakes. No. They are going to go somewhere else to sell their drugs. And maybe when they do they run into some local yokel already selling there. Then they fight. Then all of sudden, what used to be so easy to do isn't so easy anymore. ... Our hope is to become the drug dealer's worst nightmare. ... We know we are going to have our hands full."

The next step is a kick-off event at Sullivan Oval Park on July 7. The group will be "aggressively recruiting" members before then. Sliwa said he hopes to begin patrols by the end of summer.

Anyone interested in volunteering can call Sliwa at 212-860-5575.
