



## **Guardian Angels to interview candidates in New Bedford**

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August 19, 2009 2:00 AM

NEW BEDFORD — The fledgling Guardian Angels chapter will begin interviewing candidates tonight.

"We've received a lot of phone calls and e-mails from interested people," said Jerry Pinto, commander of the local chapter, adding that the group also will hold an information session Thursday night at the Bullard Street Neighborhood Association meeting.

Tonight's interviews are scheduled to begin at 6:30 at Holy Name of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Hall, 121 Mount Pleasant St., Pinto said.

He and Henry Bousquet, the second commander of the local chapter, have been active in recruiting and setting the groundwork for the New Bedford chapter of the Guardian Angels, a paramilitary-style, citizens anti-crime group.

"Now the hard work begins," Bousquet said.

The Angels have chapters in 140 cities in 14 countries, including Brockton and Boston.

Curtis Sliwa, founder and CEO of the Guardian Angels, visited New Bedford on July 10 after being contacted by citizens frustrated with the rising gun violence and persistent drug dealing in their neighborhoods.

The Angels have since conducted training patrols in the North End, marched in the Feast of the Blessed Sacrament parade, helped out with a Kool Smiles neighborhood fun day and also walked the streets during the National Night Out Against Crime.

Pinto said the group has created forms that the local Angels will use to submit tips and information to police that they receive from residents.

"We've been doing our homework," Pinto said, adding that people have already contacted him and Bousquet about drug houses and other hot spots in their neighborhoods.

Prospective candidates will be required to pass criminal background checks. They will be trained in self-defense techniques and safety patrols, as well as administering CPR and first aid.

Bousquet and Pinto said they expect to interview 10 to 15 candidates. They need at least eight members to start the chapter.

"I hope to have patrols going by the end of September," Bousquet said. "At least people are excited to see something happening."