



Guardian Angels Hit Streets Of St. Louis To Rid Neighborhood Crime

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A group that gained notoriety trying to stop violence on the mean streets of New York is hoping to make a difference in some of St. Louis' rough neighborhoods. The Guardian Angels are setting up shop here. Sunday afternoon in a neighborhood where businesses mingle with burned out buildings, redevelopment shares a block with ruin and crime-committers mix with do-gooders there is a reason for these red berets. "These areas can use all the help they can get and we are ready to step up and take responsibility," says Guardian Angel Founder Curtis Sliwa.

In the early eighties Sliwa started the Guardian Angels in the South Bronx. Citizens hit the streets with guts, gumption and a goal of improving instead of moving. "We feel like this is an area that is going to come back," says Terry Goodwin of Sun Ministries, which requested the Guardian Angels start a chapter in St. Louis. "I think that it is time for people to take a look back at the inner city and say we cant keep running to the suburbs and get rid of our problems," says Goodwin. "It's really going to depend on young men and women and adults to get involved black and white and every shade in between," Sliwa told a small group at the corner of 14th and Salisbury.

Sliwa's group will recruit, train and hopefully get people to revive troubled neighborhoods in St. Louis. "We are a citizen's unarmed patrol but we make citizens arrests serve as a visual deterrent break up fights and disputes and most importantly we source up information now so many of these young people are into this snitches get stitches and end up in ditches we dont cooperate we do." They also need the police to cooperate which doesn't always happen. some times the Guardian Angels are thought to cause more trouble than they stop but Hyde Park's alderman is ready for the red berets to tilt these streets to the better. "People that are scared to death to even come out of their house," admits Alderman Freeman Bosley Sr., "and they look up and see this

this is going to give them hope that things are really changing around here." "It takes guts obviously you are taking a great risk," says Sliwa, "but it's also taking a stand that you are not going to fold like a cheap camera you are not going surrender or retreat."

Guardianangels.org