

## GUARDIAN ANGELS MOVE FROM THE STREETS AND SUBWAYS TO THE CLASSROOMS OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

"Teaching the Teachers" Program Highlights Evolution of Guardian Angels from Volunteer Crime Fighters to Leaders in Safety Education

Founder Curtis Sliwa to Lead State-Mandated Anti-Bullying/Anti-Violence Workshop for Educators at St. John's University on Wednesday, May 14

NEW YORK, NY - May 12, 2003 - This Wednesday, May 14, 2003, the Guardian Angels, who became a New York institution with their street and subway patrols and ever-present red berets, will continue its evolution as it enters the classrooms of New York City with its Teacher Training: Anti-Bullying/Anti-Violence Workshops.

Led by founder Curtis Sliwa, the workshop is part of the Guardian Angels "Teaching the Teachers" program that is designed to help educators and education students fulfill the state-mandated requirements for safety coursework in New York and New Jersey (Chapter 544 of the 1998 New York State law regarding violence prevention and Law NJ18A;37-13-19 in New Jersey). The workshop at St. John's University is an approved program by the New York State Education Department for educators seeking certification as part of New York State's "Safe Schools Against Violence in Education" Act (Project SAVE) signed into law by Governor George E. Pataki on July 24, 2000.

The two-hour interactive workshop helps teachers recognize and prevent violence in the classroom. Teachers will learn to identify what constitutes bullying and its impact/warning signs; specific consequences of bullying; how staff can act as a team to protect kids, consequences to set for children who bully; and strategies for dealing with "at-risk" kids. The course includes role-play of dangerous scenarios and investigates safe, appropriate and timely solutions. Discussion is also held on the personal and legal protection of teachers within the context of violence in the classroom.

"We thought the Guardian Angels' first hand experience in dealing with violence, both inside and outside of schools, together with the official state material that has to be presented, would make for a much more lively, stimulating and real experience for students," said Dr. Jerrold Ross, dean of the School of Education, St. John's University.

Guardian Angels from Streets to Classrooms.2

The "Teaching the Teachers" programs are a central focus of the Guardian Angels' emphasis on expanding the reach of the non-profit organization from the streets to the classrooms, the inner city to the Internet, and from the Bronx to the boardroom.

"It's time to take a second look when you see someone wearing a red beret, because while our heritage will always be the street patrols, the Guardian Angels are essentially a new and revitalized organization," said Mary Sliwa, Guardian Angels Executive Director. "Bringing safety education into the classroom is part of our evolving mission to help guide and shape the next generation of leaders. It is a natural extension of the Guardian

Angels long-time involvement in after-school programs and demonstrates our continued emphasis on educating the general public on civic accountability and personal safety."

Curtis Sliwa said, "For all the work our members continue to do in the streets as Guardian Angels, we can't always reach kids at a young enough age to prevent them from being caught up in violence, drugs or gang activity, be it in the inner city or in the suburbs. Teachers are among the only people who have more access to kids than anyone, and we have the experience to help them recognize a potentially violent situation and to show them how to deal with it.

"It's all part of our driving vision that all children can enjoy a safe environment in which they can rise to their full potential, and acquire the self-esteem, confidence and pride of accomplishment achieved through their contribution and commitment to society," he concluded.

Founded in 1979 to provide community safety in the crime ridden Bronx, the Guardian Angels has evolved into a worldwide leader in safety education with 5,000 members in 22 chapters across the globe, including eight in Japan. In addition to its original, award-winning Guardian Angels street patrol units, which recently aided Washington, DC and Virginia residents during the sniper crisis in the fall of 2002, and the "Teaching the Teachers" initiative, programs include the Junior Guardian Angels, an early prevention program for children from 7 to 11 that teaches values and instills a sense of purpose; Urban Guardian Angels, for teens 12 to 16, that provides an alternative to gangs and drugs through a support club environment dedicated to community service and personal responsibility; and CyberAngels, (winner of the 1998 Points of Light Presidential Service Award), the nation's oldest program for online safety education that teaches children, parents and teachers how to avail themselves of the Internet's vast resources in a safe manner.

The Alliance of Guardian Angels is a 501c3 non-profit organization. For more information, visit <http://www.guardianangels.org>.