



Crime-Fighting Civilian Group Expanding In El Paso

By ABC-7 Reporter Gaby Loria
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EL PASO, Texas -- A group of "Guardian Angels" is keeping watch over El Paso. The Guardian Angels are a non-profit, volunteer organization made up of ordinary citizens combating crime. They patrol city streets and run outreach programs in the community. A new class of volunteers earned their traditional red berets Sunday afternoon during a ceremony in central El Paso.

"That's our thing to get people off the streets and do something positive," said Marco Alvara Jr., one of the new Angels.

The Guardian Angels' vow to keep the city crime-free comes on the heels of one of the most violent attacks in the drug war in Juarez. Thursday night a car bomb killed three people in a busy street in downtown Juarez.

"It's a possibility that anything could come to this side [of the border]", said Jaime Badillo, sporting his new Guardian Angels t-shirt. "We can stop this from happening."

New Guardian Angel Eddie Sanchez agreed.

"We can't be scared," Sanchez said. "We can't just be pushed around...we gotta stand up and we gotta fight."

But Darrel Petry, a spokesman for the El Paso Police Dept., said there's little to worry about on this side of the border because El Paso is considered the country's second safest city for its size. "To date, the violence in Juarez has stayed in Juarez," he said.

Guardian Angels founder Curtis Sliwa said it's just a matter of time before the violence spills over.

"You can never do enough to keep your community safe so you can't rest on your laurels," he said.