

Guardian Angels Hit Streets in Santa Cruz

By Danny Wool Mon, Jun 28, 2010



The Guardian Angels have long blurred the line between community activism and vigilantism.

One thing is certain. People are worried about the rise in gang violence that seems to be overwhelming Santa Cruz. In fact, people are so worried that they are organizing on a grassroots level to take back their city. They want to be able to walk the streets safely and to let their children go outside to play. To some, the gangs are no better than al-Qaeda. Both spread fear and terror in the

population.

This Saturday, one group, the Mother Grizzlies, was joined by visitors from across the Bay Area representing the Guardian Angels. This group, which got its start forty years ago in the subways of New York City, has a presence in dozens of cities across the country, and may soon have a home in Santa Cruz too. The Angels are easily identified by their uniforms, consisting of black pants and a black, long-sleeved t-shirt with a white t-shirt with the Guardian Angels logo over it. Then there is the red beret, which makes the Angels stand out from a distance, and give the appearance of a paramilitary group.

On Saturday, Guardian Angels patrolled the streets of Santa Cruz to give gang members a warning that they will not be tolerated here anymore. According to Ron Kanbel of the Santa Clara County Guardian Angels, the Angels are not looking to start fights. They are simply a visual presence, and an often intimidating one at that.

Often, but not always. The push to launch a local chapter of the Guardian Angels comes from a senior citizen, Beverly Young, who lost her grandson Carl Reimer to gang violence back in April. Dressed in full Angel regalia, she joined them on their patrol of the city—an intimidating grandma trying to make sure that what happened to her grandson doesn't happen again. She now hopes to start a local chapter of the Guardian Angels to warn people that gang violence will not be tolerated here anymore.