



Guardian Angels Patrol Santa Cruz Streets

Group Aims To Deter Violence By Visual Presence

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SANTA CRUZ, Calif. -- People took to the streets of Santa Cruz on Saturday outraged over increasing gang violence. In their effort to take back their city, one group contacted the Bay Area chapters of the Guardian Angels to assist in the crime watch and to set up programs to get more citizens engaged in looking out for one another.

Some people do not believe Santa Cruz is a safe environment any longer for children so they're building up an infrastructure, determined to change that.

Mother Grizzly, of Santa Cruz, said they are walking on eggshells, not living and in fear.

They said they know people that don't take their children out in strollers anymore to walk along West Cliff because they fear for their lives and their children's lives.

The Mother Grizzlies against gangs spread out around town with signs to warn visitors of the rise in violence attributed to gangs.

They were joined by a legion of Guardian Angels from the Bay Area, who were asked to walk crime-plagued areas, in a show of solidarity.

Ron Kanbel, with the Santa Clara County Guardian Angels, said they were not there to fight or cause trouble, but as a visual presence. He said while they were there, they don't see people committing crimes. He said they think twice; if they deal drugs, it's a felony. He also said as citizens, they can make a citizen's arrest.

Beverly Young lost her grandson to gang violence. She said people in gangs don't have any regard for any life at all.

Her grandson, 19-year-old Carl Reimer, was killed in April, apparently at the hands of a gang member. Young said Reimer was a surfer and not involved in any gang activity.

Knowing that law enforcement is strapped for resources, Young said she now intends to start a Guardian Angel chapter in Santa Cruz resolute on alerting her neighbors that risk to all is very real.

Young said she wants to make people aware and not be complacent because if it can happen to anyone.

A number of grassroots organizations are now working in concert with each other in Santa Cruz to start watching neighborhoods.

Once the Guardian Angel chapter gets established, they hope to patrol the streets each weekend.

The Guardian Angels are a non-profit group who, for nearly 40 years, has run programs to prevent violence in cities around the world.