



## Guardian Angels coming to Meridian

By Brian Livingston

December 18, 2009 12:42 am

— For those citizens who are fed up with crime in their neighborhoods there may be an opportunity this weekend to finally take charge of where you live and be a part of the solution and not the problem. The Jackson Chapter of the Guardian Angels, a non-profit, international, volunteer organization of unarmed citizen crime patrollers, will be at Highland Park Saturday beginning at noon to try and rally the local citizenry into starting a chapter here.

Bennie Jones, who heads the Jackson Chapter, said anyone who is interested in starting a chapter should come out to the park and get more information about the organization and how it operates.

"Over the years, Guardian Angel chapters made up of normal, everyday people, have taken responsibility for cleaning up their communities, neighborhoods and streets," said Jones. "The Guardian Angels organization is growing across the nation and world with more than 125 safety patrol chapters internationally."

Jones said the Guardian Angels organization was founded Feb. 13, 1979 in New York City by Curtis Sliwa and has chapters in 13 countries around the world.

Sliwa originally created the organization to combat widespread violence and crime on the New York City subways. The organization patrols the streets and neighborhoods but also provides education programs and workshops for schools and businesses.

"We are a mobile, patrolling set of eyes and ears made up of people in the same neighborhoods in which we are trying to clean up," said Jones. "This is an excellent way to take back your neighborhoods from those who want to prey on the unsuspecting."

Jones said volunteers must be at least 16 years old to join a chapter and patrol. Recruiters for the Guardian Angels will be on hand to answer more in depth questions on what the organization does and how to get a chapter started here in Meridian.

"I urge anyone and everyone who really cares about their city, town, neighborhood, to come to this meeting," Jones said. "Just talk to one of our recruiters. It might be the most important conversation you have this year."

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