

York's Guardian Angels need help

The local chapter leader says they can have more impact with more volunteers.

By ANGIE MASON
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Five people have signed up to join the local chapter of the Guardian Angels since 9-year-old Ciara Savage was shot and killed on a city street last weekend.

"People are wondering what they can do," said Mike Smith, leader of the York chapter of the crime prevention organization.

Smith believes his group is making a difference and has contributed to a 15 percent decrease in crime that Mayor John Brenner touted late last month. But with more volunteers, Smith said, he could do more.

"At this point, I should have 100 Guardian Angels," he said.

Even if he had 40 or 50 volunteers, he could put 10 on each side of town on any given day, he said.

"Realistically, I want to be out there 24 hours," he said.

Smith said his group has patrolled on Duke Street in the neighborhood where Ciara was killed, and they will do so again. But crime doesn't stay in one place.

"Right now in this city we think the hot spot is on Duke Street. In three more weeks it can be on East Walnut Street," he said. "It could be in the 600 block of the west end. There is not one concentrated area."

The local chapter is hosting a regional conference Sunday to discuss its relationship with the York County Sheriff's Office Criminal Response Unit. Angels officials have said they are interested in forming similar partnerships for other chapters.

Curtis Sliwa, head of the Guardian Angels, and eight other chapters are scheduled to attend. Smith said the local chapter will then participate in a scheduled unity march in honor of Ciara, and he's hoping to have Sliwa speak there.

Teisha Jordan, one of the women organizing the march, said she's received many phone calls from people who want to speak at the event, including youth ministers and people who have lost loved ones. She's hoping young people will speak as well.

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IF YOU GO

--- Curtis Sliwa, founder of the Guardian Angels, and eight Pennsylvania chapters of the

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organization will meet Sunday to discuss the York chapter's relationship with the York County Sheriff's Department.

The conference will take place at 1 p.m. at New Hope Charter School, 459 W. King St., York . The event will also celebrate the 30th anniversary of the International Guardian Angels. York chapter leader Mike Smith will be among the speakers.

--- A march against violence will be 3 p.m. Sunday in York . It will start in two places: at Crispus Attucks , 605 S. Duke St., and at the Jefferson Center, 501 N. Pershing Ave.

There will be speakers after the march, which ends at the York County Administrative Center, 29 E. Market St., York .

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