

## Guardian Angels graduate

### Crew of nine ready to hit the streets next week

By [TODD SAELHOE](#), SUN MEDIA

Hoping to help beat back crime, a volunteer crime prevention crew is ready to spread its wings and hit the streets of the city.

Calgary's first graduating class of the Guardian Angels, a safety patrol squad primed to clean up the seedy downtown scene, was saluted today after three months of training.

And the city's collection of nine red-capped crusaders includes middle-aged Janet Saretsky, a business owner on the edge of Calgary's crime-ridden East Village.

"I don't feel bothered at all that I'm the only female on this team," said Saretsky, 44.

"I don't feel any discrimination — I feel equal — and I feel good there's all these men to back me up if I need it."

Indeed, the co-owner of DogCity DayCare and DogWash at 316 3 St. S.E., is flanked by eight male Angels, including her husband Steve.

And Saretsky knows her crew is capable of spirited teamwork — buoyed by the confidence gained from top-notch training — to take on the task.

"It's time to clean up," said Saretsky, moments after being spurred on by the compelling graduation speech of Guardian Angel founder Curtis Sliwa.

"Ten years ago, the crime around here wasn't that bad, but we're hoping business owners are going to come to us to help us deal with their problems."

Bringing about a sense of community safety is also the hope of another Calgary grad, Allen Diede, the oldest Guardian Angel ever.

"It's never too late to make a difference," said Diede, 59.

"You do wonder about your personal safety — I'm the oldest one, so it has crossed my mind — but our plan is to use our minds over anything."

Calgary's training coordinator and another grad, Greg Martin, believes a successful campaign can be waged with the likes, of the Saretskys, Diede, Scott Sonne, Paul Henry, Juston Clarke, Shawn Pullar and Graham Brunka patrolling the community.

"Now we continue with more training and do patrols a couple times a week, and communication with police is going to be very important," said Martin, a 35-year-old civil servant.

“We’re hoping to be a presence — make people understand and make the criminals understand that we are out there watching and listening, and maybe they’ll go away and leave the Calgarians alone who are trying to improve their lives.”