



AMPLIFYING LGBTQ+ VOICES SINCE 1978

QVEGAS

APRIL 2-8, 2025



AN EXCLUSIVE QVEGAS INTERVIEW

LAS VEGAS MAYOR SHELLEY BERKLEY



Whether you're a local or tourist, we always feature our favorite spots along with all the new and exciting things our city has to offer.

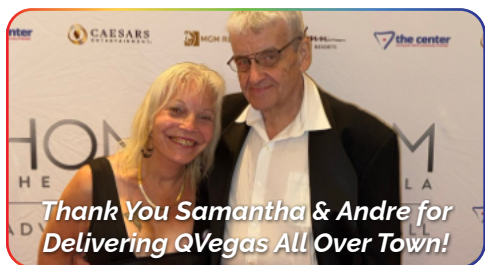
This week, in our exclusive QVegas interview—celebrating our 21st anniversary—Las Vegas Mayor Shelley Berkley sits down with publishers Russ White and Garrett Pattiani at Gipsy Nightclub to reflect on her legacy, LGBTQ+ advocacy, and bold vision for the city's future. A powerful conversation rooted in history, resilience, and inclusive leadership.

As part of our "DEI and the Road Ahead" series, Collaboration Center Foundation Executive Director Cindy Goussak tells us how the organization is redefining disability services in Las Vegas—offering inclusive, lifelong support for individuals of all ages and abilities.

Plus, we have a great gallery from Red Dress and TDOV events.



Russ White & Garrett Pattiani
Publishers, QVegas & QLife Media



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View this week's horoscopes at qvegas.com/horoscopes-are-a-drag.



AQUARIUS

APRIL 2025

Honey, let me spill the celestial tea for all my fabulous Aquarians strutting your stuff this April 2025! The cosmic runway is glittering just for you. Shine bright, darlings, as those stars are aligning like your fiercest sequin gown. Love's in the air, so work those charms! Career-wise, serve that ambition on a silver platter, and watch doors fly open. Remember, life's your stage, and darling, you are the star of this astrological show! Work it!



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LUXOR



MGM RESORTS
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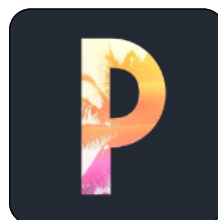
WYNN RESORTS



VIRGIN HOTELS
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THE VENETIAN RESORT
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Hotels

These hotels have a current HRC Corporate Equality Index score of 100.

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caesars.com

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The Cromwell
Flamingo
Harrah's
Horseshoe (formerly Bally's)
The LINQ
Paris
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THE VENETIAN RESORT LAS VEGAS
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These hotels have actively demonstrated support for the LGBTQ+ community but do not have a current HRC CEI of 100

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J DIESEL

KANDY MUSE



SAT APRIL 5

ULTRA BRUNCH

DOORS OPEN AT 12 PM | SHOWTIME AT 1 PM | MGG AFTER THE SHOW

**FRI APRIL 4
& SAT APRIL 5**



DEREK DANIELS
+ ATMOSFIERCE MODELS

SAT APRIL 5

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PERFORMANCE AT 11:30 PM | MGG AT 12:30 AM | DJ SET AT 12 AM

DJ EDIL



LADY CAMDEN



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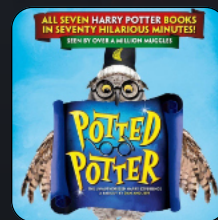
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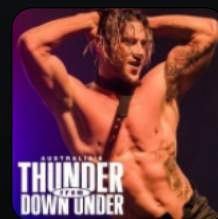
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CINDY GOUSSAK

Executive Director, Collaboration Center

Tucked away on a five-acre campus in southwest Las Vegas, just off Windmill between Buffalo and Durango, a quiet revolution in disability advocacy is taking place. It's not loud or flashy. It doesn't make headlines every day. But for over 52,000 families in Southern Nevada, it has changed lives.

This is the home of the Collaboration Center Foundation, a nonprofit disability resource network founded in 2019. Led by Executive Director Cindy Goussak, the organization was born from both timing and necessity—launched just before the world came to a standstill with the COVID-19 pandemic. While the timing was daunting, Cindy calls it “the right place, right time,” because the need for centralized, compassionate, and accessible support services for people with disabilities has never been greater.

What makes the Collaboration Center unique is not just what they do, but how they do it. They don't just offer services—they become a true partner for families navigating the often-overwhelming world of disability support. And they do it all without charging the families a dime.

A Central Point of Hope

The work of the Collaboration Center

begins with connection. When a caregiver reaches out, whether it's for a child recently diagnosed with autism or a young adult aging out of the school district system, the first step is building a relationship. Families are often caught in a bureaucratic loop—bounced between pediatricians, school counselors, state agencies, and insurance companies, all without a clear path forward.

That's where the Collaboration Center steps in. They assess the situation, connect the family to appropriate diagnostic services, assist with therapy referrals (speech, physical, occupational, feeding, ABA), and help determine what's covered under insurance or Medicaid. If that sounds simple, it's not—it's a process that many families have neither the time, energy, nor expertise to navigate alone.

Cindy explains it best: “We are the one phone call families make when they're told their child might have a developmental delay, and they have no idea where to go. We stay with them—not just for that moment, but through every stage of their journey.”

Equity Beyond Access

The theme of equity comes up often in conversations with Cindy. And it's no

DEI AND THE ROAD AHEAD

AN EXCLUSIVE SERIES
BY QVEGAS

surprise—this is an organization that doesn't just acknowledge disparities but actively works to dismantle them.

“Inclusion and equity aren't just words on our grant applications. They're the foundation of everything we do,” Cindy says.

One of the largest and most persistent gaps in equity she sees is in services for young adults with disabilities. While early childhood intervention often garners attention, resources, and public empathy, that support frequently dries up when a child turns 18. At that point, they “age out” of services provided by the school district and often face a daunting “now what?” moment.

This is where the Collaboration Center is stepping in to fill the void. Their on-campus café offers vocational training and real-world job experience for young adults with disabilities. The café serves customers from the surrounding community, and more importantly, it helps participants gain confidence, build social skills, and learn the rhythms of a work environment.

Still, Cindy is honest about the limitations. “We can only serve so many at a time. We're a small nonprofit. The need is massive.”

She also speaks candidly about the challenges of preparing businesses to truly include individuals with disabilities in the workforce. “HR departments need education. A neurotypical employee and a neurodiverse employee require different approaches when it comes to communication, expectations, and redirection. We have to reframe how businesses view workplace inclusion—it's not a charity, it's a strength.”

A Broader Definition of Disability

One of the most compelling aspects of the Collaboration Center's work is its commitment to serving the full range of disabilities—developmental, physical,

intellectual, neurodivergent—and across all ages.

Autism, in particular, is a rising concern. Today, 1 in 32 children are diagnosed with autism in the United States. That means almost everyone knows someone who is affected, either directly or through family or friends. Yet, services remain fragmented and difficult to access.

Cindy points to a typical scenario. A kindergarten teacher expresses concern about a student's developmental progress. The parents are told to "get it checked out," but they have no roadmap. Pediatricians are overworked and focused on insurance-driven visits. The process stalls. That's when the Collaboration Center becomes a lifeline—connecting the family to evaluation services, therapy providers, and often helping them understand that autism is rarely a standalone diagnosis. Comorbidities like ADHD, learning disabilities, or anxiety disorders often accompany it.

The Collaboration Center also supports individuals with more visible physical disabilities. Cindy shares how, through the center, families can find physical therapy providers who specialize in their child's specific diagnosis and understand the complex needs of their care. And if insurance changes—as it so often does—the family doesn't have to start from scratch. They come back to the Collaboration Center, and a new path forward is mapped out.

"We stay with families for the long haul," Cindy says. "Disability doesn't go away. Neither do we."

DEI Under Pressure

Given the current political climate, conversations around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are becoming increasingly difficult. What was once a rallying cry for equality has, in some corners, been weaponized and politicized. Cindy admits that the shift has affected how the Collaboration Center talks about its work.

"Inclusion is the very essence of what we do. We're building an inclusive environment for people with disabilities. But now, we have to be cautious about how we phrase it—especially when we're applying for grants."

She notes that many private donors and corporate sponsors are now wary of the term "DEI." As a result, her team has started using terms like "inclusivity" in place of "inclusion." It's a subtle change, but one they hope will avoid triggering political red flags while staying true to their mission.

"It makes me mad," Cindy says frankly. "That I have to dance around language that describes something so fundamentally human. But I won't risk funding for the

organization either. We have to survive to keep helping people."

A Safe Space for All

While the Collaboration Center does not currently have programming specifically tailored for LGBTQ+ individuals with disabilities, it is very much a safe space for everyone. The adult social groups held monthly are open to all abilities, backgrounds, and identities. Cindy emphasizes that judgment has no place on their campus. "We're the best-kept secret in town," she laughs. "But we're here, and we want the LGBTQ+ community to know that this is a space for them too."

Built on Community

The campus model of the Collaboration Center is one of its greatest strengths. The foundation carefully curates on-site partners that align with its mission, such as the Children's Heart Foundation, Boys Town, and Let's Talk Therapy Center, which recently opened the area's first developmental preschool focused on children with disabilities.

Each partnership brings specialized resources to the families who visit the campus. Whether it's autism evaluations from Boys Town or feeding therapy from Let's Talk, families benefit from having coordinated services in one location.

This model reduces friction. It simplifies access. And most importantly, it restores dignity to a process that can otherwise feel dehumanizing and overwhelming.

The Road Ahead

Cindy Goussak never expected to be doing this work. Her career began in bank marketing, and after taking time off to raise her children, she found herself struggling to re-enter the workforce. She turned to nonprofit work, fueled by a passion for community service and lived experiences through friends whose children had disabilities. What started as volunteerism turned into a mission. Now, she leads an organization that is transforming the disability support landscape in Las Vegas.

When asked what's next, Cindy doesn't hesitate. "We want to expand our reach. Serve more people. Create more vocational opportunities. And continue advocating for inclusion—even if we have to call it something else."

But no matter how the language shifts, the heart of the Collaboration Center remains the same: a community built on connection, compassion, and the unshakable belief that everyone deserves the chance to belong.

For more information about the Collaboration Center Foundation, or to support their work, visit collablv.org. The on-campus café is open weekdays from 10 am. to 2 pm. and welcomes visitors from the community.

Trump Escalates Crackdown on LGBTQ+ Rights and DEI Programs

In the past two weeks, President Donald Trump has stepped up efforts to restrict LGBTQ+ rights and dismantle Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives across multiple sectors. These actions have triggered backlash at home and abroad, legal challenges, and growing concern from civil rights advocates.

Internationally, the Trump administration directed U.S. embassies to require local suppliers and grant recipients to comply with a federal DEI ban—or risk losing funding. This directive has caused diplomatic friction, particularly in Spain, where officials called it a violation of local anti-discrimination laws. Global corporations like BMW have resisted pressure, vowing to uphold their DEI values.

Domestically, new federal restrictions are impacting arts funding. The National Endowment for the Arts, following Trump's executive orders, is now rejecting grant applications that include DEI language or support LGBTQ+ programming. Artists and cultural groups warn this could suppress queer narratives and limit creative freedom.

The private sector is also adapting. Advertising giant WPP removed all DEI references from its annual report, replacing them with the more neutral "people and culture." Although WPP claims this doesn't change internal policies, it signals how companies are shifting to avoid political scrutiny.

In entertainment, concerns over anti-trans backlash reportedly led to the removal of a non-binary character storyline from HBO's *The White Lotus*, highlighting how censorship fears are influencing media.

Legal pushback is growing. A federal judge in Chicago temporarily blocked enforcement of parts of Trump's DEI bans, citing violations of free speech and vague language that intimidates nonprofit organizations.

Despite these developments, LGBTQ+ communities remain resilient. Events for Transgender Day of Visibility continued nationwide, with advocates emphasizing the need to stand strong in the face of eroding protections.

Together, these events reveal a coordinated effort to roll back inclusion—and a growing resistance to it.



Leading with Heart

Shelley Berkley's Return to Public Service and the City She Loves

In the quiet of a weekday morning inside the iconic Gypsy Nightclub—before the music, the lights, and the crowds—newly elected Las Vegas Mayor Shelley Berkley joined QVegas Magazine publishers Russ White and Garrett Pattiani for an honest, far-reaching conversation. It was just the three of us in the historic Fruit Loop venue, a space that has long stood as a symbol of LGBTQ+ resilience and nightlife in Las Vegas. The setting was fitting for a discussion that touched on everything from public policy and personal legacy to the enduring importance of safe, inclusive spaces.

A lifelong Las Vegas and seasoned public servant, Berkley is back in office with a mission: to serve the city she calls home. Her journey spans decades—from the Nevada State Assembly to the U.S. House of Representatives, and most recently, nearly a decade in higher education leadership. Now, as mayor, she is laser-focused on the future of Las Vegas.

A Legacy of Survival and Gratitude

Asked what inspired her return to public service, Berkley reflected on her roots. "I'm the granddaughter of immigrants who fled Europe to escape the Holocaust," she said. "My mother's side came from Greece, and my father's from the Russia-Poland border. Entire communities were erased. My family survived because they were already in the U.S. by the time war broke out."

Her grandparents arrived in America without money or English, but they had hope. "They believed their children and grandchildren would have a better life—and they were right. Public service has

always been my way of giving back to the country that saved us."

Picking Up the Torch Again

After losing a hard-fought U.S. Senate race, Berkley stepped away from politics—temporarily. "I was heartbroken," she admitted. "You pour everything into a campaign, and when it ends in defeat, it's hard to know what's next."

She took a position at Touro University as CEO and Senior Provost—a role far outside her previous political life. "I didn't know if I'd last a week. I ended up staying for 9.5 years." The role gave her renewed purpose, and when it ended, she found herself asking, "What now?"

The answer came naturally. "I love Las Vegas. Mayor Goodman was termed out. And I thought: what an honor it would be to serve as mayor of my hometown."

Experience Meets Evolution

Berkley brings deep political experience to City Hall, but says her leadership style has evolved. "In my early years, I thought being the loudest voice in the room was the key to getting things done. I've since learned that listening, collaborating, and building consensus are far more effective."

This refined approach is already shaping her administration. "I'm working harder than ever—12-hour days, 7 days a week—but it's fulfilling. I feel like I'm exactly where I'm meant to be."

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion—Non-Negotiable Values

QVegas recently launched a new editorial series called DEI and the Road Ahead, and Mayor Berkley's views align strongly with

that mission. "DEI is not a buzzword—it's essential. A society that excludes people based on race, gender identity, or background misses out on enormous potential."

At Touro, she saw this first-hand. "I'd look out at our incoming class of medical students and see a reflection of America—diverse, ambitious, and ready to lead. That's the future we should all be investing in."

She added: "I don't understand the backlash against DEI. Diversity is what we are. Equity ensures fairness. Inclusion is basic decency. It benefits everyone."

The Fruit Loop: A Living Piece of LGBTQ+ History

Located in one of the city's most enduring LGBTQ+ neighborhoods, Gypsy and the surrounding Fruit Loop have deep historical roots. We asked Berkley what role she sees these spaces playing in the city's future.

"They're vital," she said. "These are safe spaces, cultural spaces. They've been here through it all—AIDS, protests, celebrations. They deserve recognition and protection."

She sees potential for these historic venues to be elevated in tourism planning, urban development, and cultural preservation. "Everyone is welcome in Las Vegas. Everyone should feel seen, respected, and celebrated."

Protecting LGBTQ+ Rights in an Uncertain Political Climate

"I remember the AIDS crisis. I was in the State Assembly. We lost an entire generation of friends, artists, activists," Berkley recalled, her voice heavy with emotion. "Then came marriage equality. It



felt like the culmination of so many fights. But now, I'm worried. We thought *Roe v. Wade* was permanent. It wasn't."

She praised Nevada for enshrining marriage equality in the state constitution, but warned against complacency. "Federal pressure is real. What if funding is threatened? What if new legislation tries to undo state protections? I have to be ready to defend this community."

Berkley recounted how Clark County Sheriff McMahon recently announced that Metro police would not cooperate with federal immigration enforcement—something she supports. "They already have too much on their plate. I don't want to live in a city where local police are rounding up undocumented families." The same philosophy applies to LGBTQ+ rights. "I believe in privacy. In dignity. What consenting adults do isn't the government's business. And if Washington turns its back on that idea, then it's up to cities like Las Vegas to stand firm."

LGBTQ+ Trailblazers Who Paved the Way

When asked about figures who've shaped Las Vegas' LGBTQ+ history, Berkley didn't hesitate. "Dr. Jerry Cade, Dr. Mel Pohl, Bob Forbuss—these were titans. They weren't just advocates; they were friends, mentors, leaders."

She recalled early fundraisers held in their homes and reflected on the losses the community suffered during the height of the AIDS crisis. "We can't forget them. We have to build on what they started."

Entertainers, Icons, and Personal Moments

From Liberace in a hardware store to

receiving artwork from Siegfried and Roy's elephant Gildah, Berkley shared lighter moments, too. "Bette Midler was unforgettable—nervous before going onstage at an event we did together, and then completely electrifying once she got out there."

These personal anecdotes offer a glimpse into Berkley's long relationship with Las Vegas' queer culture—not as an observer, but as a participant and ally.

Tackling Homelessness and Housing

One of Berkley's top priorities is confronting Las Vegas' housing crisis. "We're short by about 60,000 units," she said. "We've sold the Cashman Center for \$36 million and will redevelop it into mixed-use, workforce housing."

Homelessness is a key focus. "People shouldn't be living on the streets. It's not humane, not healthy, and not safe. We need mental health care, addiction services, and real job training. The goal isn't survival—it's dignity and stability."

Beyond the Mayor's Powers—but Not Her Passion

Although education and healthcare fall outside the mayor's direct control, Berkley is vocal about both. "We're 49th in the nation for education funding. That's unacceptable if we want to diversify our economy and attract businesses."

Similarly, the city faces a shortage of over 2,000 doctors. "Healthcare access isn't just a state issue—it's a quality of life issue, and it affects every Las Vegas."

A More Collaborative Leader

Berkley reflected on how her leadership

style has evolved. "When I was younger, I thought being the loudest voice meant winning. But I've learned that real power comes from being the most thoughtful voice in the room," she said. "I listen more now. I include people in the conversation. It's not about steamrolling—it's about persuasion. If you can show people that your idea helps them too, you'll win support."

It's a message that resonates deeply with the city's diverse communities. From small business owners to activists, educators to entertainers, Berkley is making it a point to listen.

Advice for the Next Generation

To LGBTQ+ youth considering a career in public service, Berkley offered simple but powerful advice: "Do it. If you care about people, if you want to serve—don't let anyone tell you no."

She added: "The worst that can happen is you lose. I've lost before. But I kept going. And look where I am now."

A Final Thought

As the interview wrapped up, Mayor Berkley looked around the quiet, empty nightclub. "It looks beautiful in here. I hope people know how special this place is—not just for partying, but for what it represents."

Las Vegas has a new mayor—but for Shelley Berkley, it's always been about serving the people who make this city what it is. Her heart remains firmly rooted in the community. Her focus, as always, is the future.



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ACLU
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ADL
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bears.lv.org

COMMUNITY COUNSELING CENTER OF SOUTHERN NEVADA
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HENDERSON PRIDE
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irscdei.org

LAMBDA BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
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LAS VEGAS MEN'S CHORUS
lvmenschorus.org

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lucoflv.com

LEGACY COUNSELING
legacycounselingandworkforceconnections.com

MAMA DRAGONS
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ngra.com

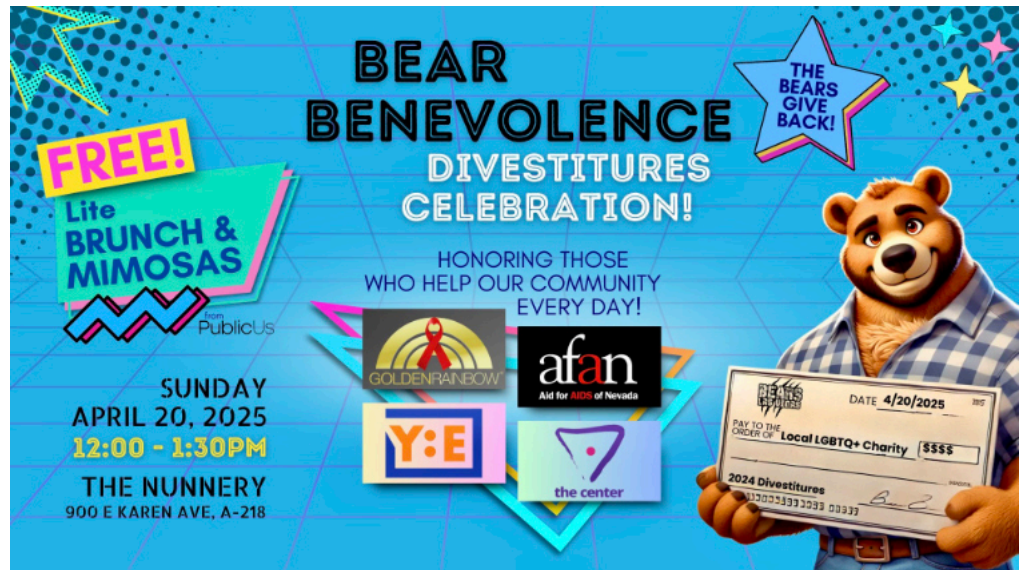
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APRIL GUEST SPEAKER: ANDREW WOODS

DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH AT UNLV

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Photo of Andrew Woods in a suit and tie.

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AIDS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION (AHF)
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FARABI WELLNESS CENTER
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GOLDEN RAINBOW
goldenrainbow.org

HORIZON RIDGE WELLNESS CLINIC
hrc.lv.org

SIN SITY SISTERS OF PERPETUAL INDULGENCE
sinsitysisters.org

STI Testing

THE ARLENE COOPER COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER
thecenterlv.org

AIDS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION (AHF)
aidshealth.org

FARABI WELLNESS CENTER
hplv.com

HUNTRIDGE FAMILY CLINIC
huntridgefamilyclinic.org

SOUTHERN NEVADA HEALTH DISTRICT
southernnevadahealthdistrict.org

UMC
umcsn.com



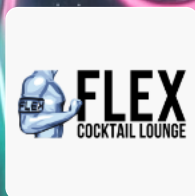
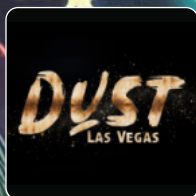
AIDS WALK LAS VEGAS SUNDAY APRIL 27, 2025

afan LIVE U=U

Illustration of a red ribbon and silhouettes of people walking.

Q VEGAS BAR & NIGHTCLUB GUIDE

Download on the App Store



MONDAYS

SURRENDER MONDAYS

HOSTED BY LACHERRY WILD
\$100 CASH HOT BODY CONTEST + SHOWTIME @ 1 AM
MUSIC BY DJ V
\$7 TITOS COCKTAILS + \$6 DOMESTIC BEERS | 10 PM TO 3 AM

FRIDAY APRIL 04

KANDY MUSE

FROM RUPAUL'S DRAG RACE S13 + ALL STARS 8 AND HOUSE OF VILLAINS ON E!
SHOWTIME
1:30 AM MAIN ROOM
MEET & GREET
12:30 AT GIPSY

FRIDAYS

FETISH

SHOWTIMES
12:00 AM FRONT ROOM
1:30 AM MAIN ROOM

TUESDAYS

VAQUERO VAQUERO

HOSTED BY PALOMA MAKARY
SHOWTIME @ 1:30 AM FRONT ROOM
MUSIC BY DJ V / DJ VAGO
\$6 HOUSE MARGARITAS + \$10 DOMESTIC
\$15 IMPORT BEER BUCKETS | 10 PM TO 3 AM

SATURDAY APRIL 05

LADY CAMDEN

FROM RUPAUL'S DRAG RACE S14
SHOWTIME
1:30 AM MAIN ROOM
MEET & GREET
12:30 AT GIPSY

FRIDAYS + SATURDAYS

LATIN CALIENTE

HOSTED BY PALOMA MAKARY
MUSIC BY DJ V
SHOWTIME
2 AM IN THE DREAM LOUNGE
FREE BUCKET OF BEER W/ PURCHASE OF BUCHANAN'S BOTTLE

WEDNESDAYS

WET

HOSTED BY SAGE O'HARA ANDREWS
SHOWTIME @ 1:00 AM FRONT ROOM
MUSIC BY DJ VAGO
\$6 SPECIALTY COCKTAILS | 10 PM TO 3 AM

**SATURDAY + SUNDAY
APRIL 05 + 06**

DAZED & DANDY

SHOWTIMES
SATURDAY
12:00 AM IN THE FRONT ROOM
1:30 AM IN THE MAIN ROOM
SUNDAY
1:00 AM IN THE FRONT ROOM

ENCORE SUNDAYS

HOSTED BY DJ V / DJ VAGO
SHOWTIME
1:00 AM IN THE FRONT ROOM
\$5 WELL COCKTAILS 'TIL MIDNIGHT

THURSDAYS

REPLAY

HOSTED BY ROMAN VAJOURE + ADAM KING AGUIAR
SOUNDS BY DJENYLD + DJ V
SHOWTIME
10:30 AM FRONT ROOM
1:30 AM MAIN ROOM
\$6 WELL COCKTAILS BEFORE MIDNIGHT

SUNDAYS

LATIN SUNDAYS

HOSTED BY PALOMA MAKARY
MUSIC BY DJ V
SHOWTIME
1:30 AM IN THE MAIN ROOM
\$20 DOMESTIC + \$25 IMPORT BUCKETS | 10 PM TO CLOSE