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Walk Back Into Care:
Start with a Morning Stretch with
the Chippendales at AFAN's 36th
Annual AIDS Walk Las Vegas



Photos: Denise Truscello

With a proud publishing legacy that dates back to 1978, QVegas has been at the heart of Las Vegas' LGBTQ+ community for over four decades. What began as a grassroots newsletter has evolved into a dynamic weekly publication that informs, celebrates, and amplifies queer voices across Southern Nevada. QVegas is available in print at over 30 LGBTQ+ establishments, community nonprofits, and partner advertiser locations, making it a vital part of the local scene.

Beyond the printed page, QVegas connects with readers through a robust digital presence—on the web, across all major social media platforms, in our dedicated iOS app, and through weekly email blasts that keep the community in the know. Our coverage spans nightlife, entertainment, politics, health, advocacy, and the everyday stories that make up the diverse LGBTQ+ experience in Las Vegas.

As an advertiser-supported publication, QVegas is the most effective way to reach LGBTQ+ locals and visitors alike—offering unparalleled access to one of the city's most loyal and engaged audiences. In an era where equality rights are under attack nationwide, QVegas stands as a strong and unwavering community partner, committed to visibility, representation, and celebrating the power of queer voices.



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Sneakers, Sequins, and Stormtroopers: A Spring Worth Showing Up For

This issue lands at a meaningful moment for our community. On Sunday, April 26, hundreds of us will lace up and head to Craig Ranch Regional Park in North Las Vegas for the 36th Annual AIDS Walk Las Vegas. Aid for AIDS of Nevada has been doing this work since 1984, and this year's theme — "Walk Back into Care" — cuts right to the heart of what AFAN does best: meeting people where they are, without judgment, and reconnecting them with the treatment, housing, food, and case management that make thriving possible. The move to Craig Ranch is intentional. It brings the walk closer to the neighborhoods most impacted by HIV, and it signals that outreach in Southern Nevada is expanding, not contracting. Registration is free at afanlv.org. Check-in opens at 8 a.m., the festival kicks off at 9, and the walk steps off at 10. Whether you fundraise, donate, or simply show up in a good pair of sneakers, you are the point. Bring a friend. Bring two. Bring the whole block.

Flip a few pages and you'll find our photo spread from Sin City Sister Red Dress 2026, captured beautifully by Joshua Dagon of JD Images. The Sin City Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence threw the kind of night this city does better than anywhere else — sequins, stilettos, a little holy mischief, and a whole lot of heart raised for HIV services and community care. Josh's lens caught every bit of it, from the first red-carpet arrival to the last glass raised in benediction. If you were there,

rely on it. If you weren't, consider this your formal invitation to next year, and maybe start hemming that gown now.

And because the Force is strong with this issue — May the 4th Be With You, darlings. The Empire Strips Back celebrates its first year in residency at the Rio this month, and seven nights a week they are proving that burlesque and the Skywalker saga were always meant to end up in the same cantina. Stormtrooper stripteases. A Chewbacca who whispers sweet nothings mid-lift. A gloriously unhinged Emperor Palpatine who may or may not be someone you'd recognize under the hood. One full year of pasties, parody, and pure Vegas glee. That is not a disturbance in the Force — that is the Force finally loosening its belt and asking the band to play something with a little more bass.

Walk on the 26th. Catch the show on the 4th. Take care of each other in between.



Russ White & Garrett Pattiani
Publishers, QVegas & QLife Media

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Mar 21 - Apr 19
April 2026

Darling, April is YOUR moment to snatch the crown! Venus has you serving looks and charisma—relationships ignite with passion, honey. Career-wise, strut into that promotion conversation; Mercury's got your back. Personal growth? Channel that fierce energy into setting boundaries, queen. Trust your instincts absolutely. Mid-month brings unexpected romance. Remember: you're not just living, you're PERFORMING your best life. Werk it, legendary creature!

via QVegas

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- Affirming Healthcare for All
- Research Advancing LGBTQIA+ Health and Wellness
- Community-Based, Culturally Competent Mental Health
- LGBTQIA+ Care Rooted in Dignity and Respect
- Culturally Responsive Care for Communities of Color
- Mobile Health for Rural and Underserved Communities





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A large image at the top of the page features a Chewbacca costume on the left and a smiling man with a beard, wearing a white shirt and a dark blue blazer, on the right. The man is posing with one arm raised in a celebratory gesture. The background is dark with some green stage lighting.

The Empire Strips Back Celebrates One Year at Rio Las Vegas

It's hard to describe **The Empire Strips Back – A Burlesque Parody** in just one sentence, but imagine **Star Wars colliding with a disco ball Death Star, a dance battle, and a cheeky strip show in a galaxy far, far away—and you're on the right track.**

Now celebrating its one-year anniversary at the Rio Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, **The Empire Strips Back** performs seven nights a week, and there's no better time to catch the show than around "May the 4th Be with You"—the ultimate Star Wars holiday. This gleefully risqué reimagining of George Lucas's beloved universe strips away the serious space drama and replaces it with seductive choreography, comedic timing, jaw-dropping visuals, and plenty of surprises underneath the costumes (or lack thereof). From Stormtrooper stripteases to gender-bending Jedi, the production is a love letter to burlesque and fandom alike.

Originally staged in a 150-seat Sydney bar, the show has since played to over 300,000 fans globally, with viral videos racking up millions of views. The Vegas residency marks the first production to go beyond pasties in select numbers, dialing up the heat while keeping its signature balance of charm, wit, and full-throttle entertainment.

One of the standouts is Nathan Kara, a New Zealand-born dancer who brings swagger and cheek to his burlesque take on Han Solo.

"It's pretty epic," Nathan laughs. "I grew up watching Star Wars with my dad, and Han always stood out. When they offered me this role, I was like, wait, I get to do what?"

Nathan began dancing at age five in Auckland, training in hip hop, jazz, tap, and contemporary. His career took him through *The X Factor New Zealand*, international hip hop competitions, three years of touring in China, *Magic Mike Live* in Australia, and eventually *Cirque du Soleil's The Beatles LOVE* in Las Vegas. When *LOVE* closed in 2023, he transitioned to a horror-themed burlesque show directed by Bec Morris—a collaboration that led directly to his casting here.

His onstage partner is Joshua Bluhm, who plays Chewbacca. "Josh whispers stuff to me through the mask while we're dancing," Nathan laughs. "We'll be doing the Backstreet Boys number, and he'll be like, 'Don't worry, I got you,' while he swings me around."

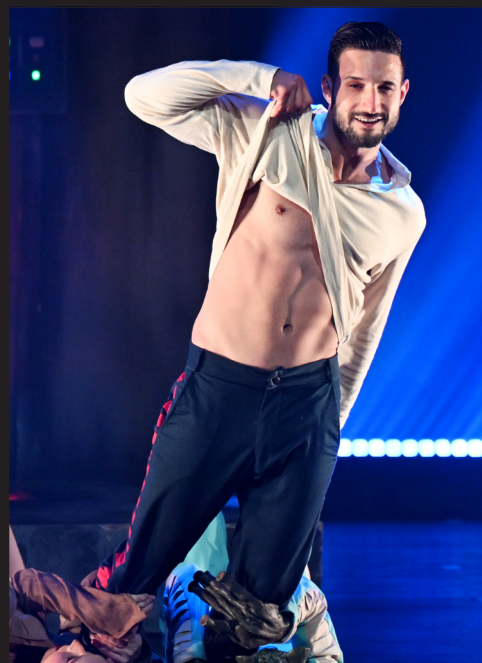
Nathan also plays a hilariously grotesque Emperor Palpatine. "Nobody knows it's me under the mask," he grins.

Asked to describe the show in three words, Nathan doesn't hesitate: "Sexy. Funny. Inclusive."

"There's something for everyone. The cast represents so many backgrounds and body types. It feels like everyone belongs here. Even if you're not a Star Wars fan, you'll have a blast."

As the show marks its first year on the Strip and Star Wars fans everywhere prepare to celebrate May the 4th, there's no better way to honor the galaxy far, far away than with a little intergalactic tease.

The Empire Strips Back performs at Rio Hotel & Casino seven nights a week. For tickets, visit theempirestripsback.com.



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Walk Back Into Care: The 36th Annual AIDS Walk Las Vegas

For over three decades, the Las Vegas community has laced up its sneakers to march toward a future free of HIV/AIDS. On Sunday, April 26, 2026, that tradition continues with the 36th Annual AIDS Walk Las Vegas. This year marks a significant milestone, as the event moves to a new location: Craig Ranch Regional Park in North Las Vegas. This shift reflects a commitment to expanding outreach into communities disproportionately impacted by the virus, ensuring that resources and awareness reach every corner of the valley.

Organized by Aid for AIDS of Nevada (AFAN), the walk is the state's largest and most significant fundraising event dedicated to HIV/AIDS. Since its founding in 1984, AFAN has stood as the oldest and largest AIDS service organization in Nevada. The walk serves as the lifeblood for the agency's mission, providing the funding necessary to support those currently living with or affected by HIV in Southern Nevada.

presented in partnership with the Clark County Office of HIV and the U=U Campaign. This year's theme, "Walk Back into Care," reflects AFAN's mission to reconnect individuals in the community with the HIV care, support, and resources they need to thrive. "Walk Back into Care" speaks to the reality that life can pull people away from HIV treatment and support, and that it is never too late to

return. The theme serves as a reminder that AFAN stands ready to help individuals connect with providers and care resources.

This is an opportunity for the community to get free HIV testing and learn more about Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) and undetectable = untransmittable (U=U). Attendees will be encouraged to engage with AFAN by filling out an online form to learn more about the care that is available to them and receive assistance with enrollment and referrals to local service providers.

The morning kicks off at 9:00 a.m. with a vibrant community festival and resource fair. It is more than just a fundraiser; it is a celebration of resilience. Local entertainers, community leaders, and businesses gather to provide a festive atmosphere that balances the seriousness of the cause with the hope of a supportive community. The walk itself begins at 10:00 a.m., winding through the scenic trails of Craig Ranch Regional Park.

The funds raised through registration and donations go directly toward essential client services that many Nevadans rely on for survival and dignity. These programs include: Medical Case Management: Helping clients navigate the complexities of healthcare. Housing Assistance: Ensuring that individuals have a safe, stable environment to focus on their health.

Food Programs: Providing nutritional support to those in need.

Prevention and Education: Offering free HIV testing and outreach to reduce new infection rates and eliminate the lingering stigma associated with the disease.

The history of AIDS Walk Las Vegas is intertwined with the city's identity. From the early days of the "plague" in the 1980s—when fear and hysteria threatened the local entertainment industry—to the modern era of medical breakthroughs, AFAN has been the "voice of reason." Longtime supporters like the legendary duo Penn & Teller have frequently served as Grand Marshals, spearheading challenges that have raised millions of dollars over the years.

Registration for the 36th Annual AIDS Walk is free, though participants are encouraged to fundraise or donate to support AFAN's vital work. Whether you are walking solo, joining a corporate team, or simply attending the festival to show your support, your presence makes a difference.

As Las Vegas continues to grow, the need for advocacy and education remains as critical as ever. By gathering at Craig Ranch Regional Park this April, the community sends a clear message: no one in Southern Nevada has to face HIV alone.



Event Details:

Date: Sunday, April 26, 2026

Location: Craig Ranch Regional Park, North Las Vegas

Time:

Check in 8-9 am

9:00 AM (Festival)

10:00 AM (Walk)

Registration: afanlv.org

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THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY CENTER OF SOUTHERN NEVADA
thecenterlv.org

ACLU
aclunv.org

ADL
lasvegas.adl.org

ALCOHOLICS TOGETHER
alcoholicstogetherlasvegas.com

BEARS LAS VEGAS
bearslv.org

HENDERSON PRIDE
hendersonpride.org

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN
hrc.org

IMPERIAL ROYALE SOVEREIGN COURT OF THE DESERT EMPIRE
ircdei.org

LAMBDA BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
lambdalv.com

LAS VEGAS MEN'S CHORUS
lvmenschorus.org

LAS VEGAS PRIME TIMERS
lasvegasprimetimers.com

LEATHER UNIFORM CLUB OF LAS VEGAS (LUC OF LV)
thelucofvlv.com

MAMA DRAGONS
mamadragons.org

NEVADA GAY RODEO ASSOCIATION
ngra.com

THE PRIDE TREE
thepridetreelv.com

SILVER STATE EQUALITY
silverstateequality.org

SOUTHERN NEVADA ASIAN PACIFIC ISLANDER QUEER SOCIETY
snapiqs.org

YOUNG: EQUAL
youngequal.org

Wellness Resources

THE GAVIN J. GOORJIAN COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER
thecenterlv.org

AFFINIDERM
affiniderm.com

COMMUNITY COUNSELING CENTER OF SOUTHERN NEVADA
cccfsn.org

FARABI WELLNESS CENTER
hplvlv.com

HUNTRIDGE FAMILY CLINIC
huntridgefamilyclinic.org

PARCS DENTISTRY
parcsdentistry.com

SOUTHERN NEVADA HEALTH DISTRICT
southernnevadahealthdistrict.org

UMC
umcsn.com

STI/HIV/AIDS Resources

THE ARLENE COOPER COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER
thecenterlv.org

AID FOR AIDS OF NEVADA (AFAN)
afanlv.org

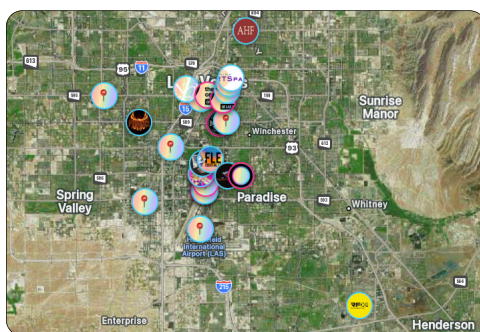
AIDS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION (AHF)
aidshealth.org

CAN COMMUNITY HEALTH
cancommunityhealth.org/las-vegas

GOLDEN RAINBOW
goldenrainbow.org

SIN SITY SISTERS OF PERPETUAL INDULGENCE
sinsitysisters.org

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Bar & Nightlife Guide



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4605 Paradise Rd

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4640 Paradise Rd

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THE EAGLE

3430 E Tropicana Ave Unit 47

FLEX COCKTAIL LOUNGE

501 E Twain Ave

FUN HOG RANCH

495 E Twain Ave

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