

AMPLIFYING LGBTQ+ VOICES SINCE 1978

QVEGAS

OCTOBER 4-10, 2023



Project

NUNWAY

**DESIGNERS COMPETE IN
SIN CITY SISTERS
ANNUAL FUNDRAISER**

**CHAD MICHAELS AND ALEXIS MATEO
HOST AT THE SAHARA OCTOBER 14**





Photo: Shane O'Neill/SON Studios



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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.

Las Vegas is shimmering with pride and purpose this week as the Sin City Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence bring their renowned Project Nunway fundraiser to the iconic Strip for the first time. With drag legends Chad Michaels and Alexis Mateo taking on hosting duties, this unique fashion extravaganza promises more than just glamour. Eleven innovative artists are set to blend fashion with activism, aiming to raise crucial funds for SADAP, supporting individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

As the city revels in PRIDE month, the spirit of celebration and unity is palpable. Top LGBTQ+ venues like Piranha, Queen Las Vegas, and The Garden are gearing up with an array of events that promise revelry and camaraderie.

California Governor Gavin Newsom has made a historic appointment by naming Laphonza Butler to the US Senate, succeeding Dianne Feinstein. Butler's appointment is significant as she becomes the first black and openly lesbian individual to hold such a position, symbolizing progress and representation.



Russ White & Garrett Pattiani
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lastregalv.com

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harlosteak.com

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LAGUNA POOL HOUSE & KITCHEN

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SPOTLIGHT LOUNGE

Sunday Brunch

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Paris Las Vegas

HONEY SALT

Summerlin

GIADA'S

Cromwell

EL DORADO CANTINA

Latin Brunch Weekend



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Bottomless Queen's Nunch

SR. FROGS AT TREASURE ISLAND

Voss Events presents Drag Brunch

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Bottomless Drag Brunch

HAMBURGER MARY'S LAS VEGAS

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HYPNOSIS UNLEASHED

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Bally's Las Vegas

THE BEATLES LOVE

Mirage

ILUMINATE

The Strat

ATOMIC SALOON

Venetian

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Cosmopolitan

ABSINTHE

Caesars Palace

WOW

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MANDALAY PLACE

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MIRACLE MILE SHOPS

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THE FORUM SHOPS

3500 S Las Vegas Blvd, Las Vegas, NV 89109

THE SHOPS AT CRYSTALS

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Queer Connections

From Congressional Appointments to Drag Show Victories

The LGBTQ+ community continues to make strides in representation, resilience, and recognition. Recent events, spread from the dynamic heart of Texas to the influential realm of Washington, D.C., illuminate this progress, creating a blueprint for future endeavors. This article delves into these significant milestones and their implications on the broader societal canvas.

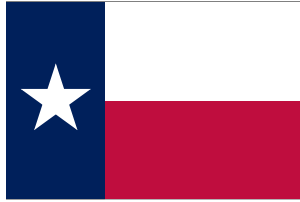
The Texas Triumph: A Stage for Expression

In Texas, a state known for its robust conservative values, a landmark decision shook the status quo. A proposed law, veiled under the pretext of protecting minors, threatened to criminalize drag performances. Such a move was not only a potential affront to the performing arts community but also a major setback to LGBTQ+ rights. However, in a surprising turn of events, a federal judge declared this law unconstitutional, defending the inherent right to artistic expression.

This ruling couldn't have come at a more crucial time. Across the U.S., there's a rising legislative trend aimed at restricting drag performances, particularly in front of younger audiences. While some states have enacted these laws, others face legal challenges. The Texas verdict, thus, offers a beacon of hope, illuminating a path toward more inclusive legislation.

Laphonza Butler: Making History in Congress

On the political front, a seismic shift occurred with the appointment of Laphonza Butler to the U.S. Congress, making her the first openly Black lesbian to grace the Senate's chambers. Appointed by California Governor Gavin Newsom to



replace the late Senator Dianne Feinstein, Butler's rise to prominence is both symbolic and significant.

Butler is no stranger to politics. Her credentials, as a Democratic strategist and an advisor to Vice President

Kamala Harris during her 2020 presidential campaign, speak volumes. But it's her unique identity—as an openly queer Black woman—that adds layers of diversity and representation to the Senate. Furthermore, as the president of EMILY's List, she holds a dual mantle, advocating for the election of pro-choice Democratic women, thereby further diversifying the political narrative.

This appointment underscores a broader shift towards inclusivity. Not too long ago, such representation in the Senate would have been unthinkable. Yet, here we are, witnessing history in the making.

Connecting the Dots: Resilience & Representation

While drag performances and Senate appointments might seem worlds apart, they share a common thread—resilience in the face of adversity. Both the Texas verdict and Butler's appointment underscore the importance of visibility and voice. They emphasize the necessity to recognize and respect diverse expressions and identities, whether it's on a performance stage or in

the halls of Congress.

Moreover, these milestones are not isolated events but rather elements of a larger tapestry of change. They mirror a society increasingly ready to move beyond its biases and prejudices. The Texas ruling signifies the protection of LGBTQ+ cultural expressions, ensuring that artforms deeply intertwined with the community's history aren't suppressed. On the other hand, Butler's appointment amplifies voices that have been historically marginalized, ensuring they play a part in shaping national policies and narratives.

Looking Ahead: Challenges & Opportunities

Despite these victories, challenges persist. Legal battles continue in states attempting to restrict LGBTQ+ rights. Legislative moves, some subtle and others overt, aim to marginalize LGBTQ+ voices and expressions. But every win, whether on the Texan legal front or in the political domain of California, serves as a beacon, lighting the way for future advocacy and activism.

The queer community, along with its allies, remains at the forefront of these battles. Organizations like the ACLU are champions for rights, and leaders like Butler redefine political landscapes. Such endeavors, combined with grassroots activism and societal support, are critical in ensuring that the trajectory of progress remains upwards.

Conclusion

America's socio-political landscape is under transformation. Milestones like those achieved in Texas and through Butler's appointment reflect a nation grappling with its values and vision. For the LGBTQ+ community, these events signify hope, resilience, and a promise of a future where every voice counts. The road ahead may be winding, but with determination and unity, there's no barrier too high to overcome.



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Project Nunway: Where Fashion Meets Philanthropy

Las Vegas, the city synonymous with glitz, also houses a unique fusion of fashion and fervor: Project Nunway. Amidst the city's theatrical lights and exuberant shows, this event stands apart, not just for its avant-garde fashion display, but also for its heartwarming philanthropic mission.

Designers take to the challenge of transforming unconventional materials into runway masterpieces. However, beneath the surface lies a deeper mission. This event, in all its glamour, is a significant fundraiser for the Sin Sity Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence.

The Sin Sity Sisters, bedecked in their iconic nun habits and vibrant makeup, are far more than a performance group. They're a movement. Their mission is deeply rooted in advocacy and assistance, especially within the LGBTQ+ community. Among their various endeavors, a standout

initiative is the support and fundraising for SADAP (Sister's AIDS Drug Assistance Program).

With healthcare costs soaring, many individuals grappling with HIV/AIDS find themselves in dire need of assistance. SADAP is their beacon of hope, offering much-needed help to access vital medications. Funds raised through Project Nunway bolster this program, making a tangible difference in countless lives.

Each year, the event draws artists and designers from various backgrounds, each eager to showcase their creations and contribute to the cause. The runway becomes a canvas, portraying designs that are not just visually arresting but also resonate with themes of hope, resilience, and transformation. These designs, often crafted using recycled or unorthodox materials, perfectly encapsulate the event's spirit: metamorphosis. As

rudimentary materials evolve into sartorial marvels, the funds amassed help transform lives, furnishing hope and sustenance to those battling health adversities.

Over its tenure, Project Nunway has burgeoned not just in scale but in impact. Every ticket purchased and every ensemble showcased contributes to the community's well-being. Attendees, while enraptured by the fashion spectacle, are also conscious participants in a noble mission.

Project Nunway epitomizes the confluence of art and activism. It serves as a testament to the power of community collaboration. As attendees depart, they're imbued with more than memories of a splendid show; they leave with the gratifying knowledge of their contribution to a cause, a cause that's reshaping lives, one outfit and one pill at a time.



Austin Mulvenon – 2022 Winner & 2023 Judge

In the dynamic world of fashion, Austin Mulvenon has emerged as a formidable force. 2023 marked a monumental year for them, as they clinched the prestigious title at Project Nunway, solidifying their status as a leading fashion visionary.

A proud alumnus of the International Academy of Design and Technology, Austin's foundation in design principles combined with their innovative flair set them apart. Beyond individual achievements, Austin's influence permeates institutions. As a founding member of the Las Vegas Fashion Design Council, they've been instrumental in sculpting the city's fashion narrative, offering guidance and mentorship to budding designers.

Austin's association with Project Nunway has been nothing short of spectacular. Over four appearances, they've consistently showcased a blend of avant-garde designs and timeless elegance, leaving audiences and critics alike in awe. Each presentation is more than just fashion; it's a story, a journey through Austin's evolving style ethos.

After making significant waves in Las Vegas for over two decades, Austin has embarked on a new adventure, migrating to the fashion mecca: New York City. In the city's bustling lanes and against its iconic skyline, Austin is poised to make a mark. With their rich legacy and unmatched creativity, the fashion community anticipates Austin Mulvenon's next chapter, confident that it will be as groundbreaking as their illustrious past.



Ron Henderson

Ron Henderson, the creative genius behind Varaluz and Varaluz Casa, seamlessly blends a foundation in aerospace engineering with a keen eye for fashion. For over two decades, Ron's avant-garde designs in home decor have not only won awards but have also resonated deeply with designers and retailers.

But Varaluz isn't just about unique aesthetics. Born from Ron's profound concern about the burgeoning landfills harming our planet, he envisioned a brand that was both visually stunning and eco-friendly. Varaluz stands as a beacon of sustainable design, with each piece crafted from at least 70% recycled steel and 100% recycled glass. The brand epitomizes the perfect marriage between beauty and responsibility to the environment.

This year, Ron brings this ethos of sustainable elegance to Project Nunway. And if his past creations are anything to go by, the audience can expect a showcase that pairs sustainability with a touch of theatrical drama. Ron's participation promises a fusion of design, sustainability, and perhaps, a flair for the unexpected. As anticipation builds, all eyes are set on Ron Henderson, awaiting a presentation that will undoubtedly blur the lines between art, responsibility, and drama.



Marcus Phillips

Introducing Marcus Phillips: a multifaceted marvel with a background steeped in classical music, a penchant for the world of cosplay, and an emerging flair for fashion design. Drawing inspiration from the electrifying worlds of anime, pop culture, and the flamboyant universe of drag queens, Marcus's vision is nothing short of fabulous. From the soulful chords of classical compositions to the intricate details of a bedazzled jockstrap or a show-stopping Comic Con outfit, Marcus's creations echo his penchant for the extraordinary.

However, venturing into runway fashion, Marcus has an ambition that transcends aesthetic allure. He envisions a runway where every individual feels empowered to channel their inner diva, making fashion an inclusive celebration of authenticity and self-expression.

As the curtains rise and the spotlight shines, anticipation fills the air for Marcus's "Nunway" debut. It promises not just an array of designs but a theatrical spectacle infused with drama, pizzazz, and a generous splash of fun. In a realm where innovation reigns supreme, Marcus Phillips seems poised to redefine fashion norms, promising a show that's bound to leave an indelible mark. The fashion world, with bated breath, waits to be enchanted by this dazzling newcomer. And with that, let the Marcus magic commence!

Cecil and Matthew Kester Shatswell

For over 13 years, Las Vegas has been graced by the dynamic presence of Cecil and Matthew. Their profound immersion in the LGBTQ+ community is marked by a series of remarkable accomplishments. The duo has energetically participated in the Las Vegas Gay Softball League, volunteered with the theatrical Sin City Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, and fostered ties with the Idaho Chapter of The International Court System. Their dedication is further underscored by the establishment of a business specifically tailored for the LGBTQ+ demographic.

Cecil's artistic prowess finds its stage at the Beatles Love show by Cirque Du Soleil, where he excels in the wig and makeup department, serving as a full-time backup lead technician. Together, their combined creativity birthed "Cocky Punk", a brand that has carved its niche in Las Vegas's nightlife. Collaborating with prominent names like Piranha Nightclub and the rising star Gipsy nightclub, they design exclusive GoGo apparel. Their creations, both audacious and original, are sported by some of the city's most celebrated GoGo dancers.

The Project Nunway stage, a realm of innovation and flair, eagerly awaits their next creation. The buzz in the air is palpable. As the curtains rise, all eyes are on the Cocky Punk boys, anticipating another display of their unmatched talent and vision. The stage is set, and the city is ready for Cecil and Matthew's next captivating reveal.



Justin Silva

Introducing Justin Silva: a vibrant spirit with the heart of a bear and the hands of a costume designer. Beyond his costume-making prowess, Justin identifies as a serial hobbyist, frequently caught in the web of Pinterest's alluring world of inspiration. Though originally from the sun-kissed landscapes of California, he's seamlessly blended into his new surroundings for over a decade, celebrating life alongside a loving partner.

Justin's latest design endeavor is both a nod to history and a reflection of media's influence. He has delved deep into the annals of the 1980s, extracting the essence of the gay experience from that epoch. Yet, his creation is not a mere reflection of the past; it juxtaposes lived experiences with the media's portrayal of the LGBTIA+ community during that transformative decade.

Through the lens of his design, one sees a vivid tapestry woven from strands of joy, struggle, resilience, and change emblematic of the 80s gay experience. Additionally, Justin's keen observation of media depictions infuses his work with layers of depth, challenging and celebrating the narratives that have shaped perceptions.

In essence, Justin Silva's work is more than just fashion; it's a canvas painted with history, personal experiences, and the nuanced narratives of the LGBTIA+ community. As viewers and critics await his latest masterpiece, there's an anticipation of a tale that's both visually striking and profoundly evocative.



Chris Cope

For two decades, Las Vegas has been enriched by the creative brilliance of Chris Cope. His journey in the city began with 16 enchanting years dedicated to mesmerizing both the young and the matured with his exceptional balloon artistry. These creations weren't just entertainment; they were a testament to Chris's dedication to enlivening Las Vegas with his art.

But balloons were just one facet of his multi-dimensional craft. Over recent years, Chris shifted his focus, pouring his creativity into building two distinct enterprises: Party Fowl Antiques and Mid Mod Crisis. Starting from scratch, he molded them into prominent establishments. Whether it's his personal spaces, his businesses, or his diverse artistic endeavors, one consistent thread is Chris's unparalleled aesthetic marked by daring, bold colors.

Project Nunway is no stranger to Chris's genius. Having graced its stage before, this year promises something even more spectacular. As whispers and murmurs fill the artistic corridors of Las Vegas, there's anticipation for Chris's latest showcase. He's poised to combine his iconic vibrant palette with audacious statements that promise to be both thought-provoking and visually enthralling.

Those familiar with Chris's previous forays on the Nunway stage know that when he presents, it's not just fashion; it's an experience. The stage is set, the curtains are ready to rise, and the audience is on the edge of their seats, awaiting another captivating chapter from Chris Cope's artistic anthology.

Sean Stuart

Sean Stuart's narrative is deeply intertwined with the world of entertainment. Since his early days, the vibrant backdrops of shows and performances have been his learning playground. But it wasn't just the art of performance that captured his attention; the world behind the curtains beckoned him too. Under the mentorship of seasoned costumers, Sean mastered the intricate art of sewing. This newfound skill, however, was not just a backstage hobby. It became a pivotal tool when he decided to combine the sultry world of burlesque with the towering challenge of performing on stilts. This unique act demanded costumes that transcended the ordinary, pushing Sean to innovate and tailor with unparalleled creativity.

After a triumphant debut, Sean is set to return to the illustrious stage of Project Nunway. As whispers of his participation spread, anticipation within the fashion and entertainment communities surges. Those fortunate enough to have witnessed his initial showcase understand the depth of artistry and originality he embodies. This year, expectations are even loftier.

With a rich tapestry of experiences, from the spotlights on stage to the hum of the sewing machine, Sean's multifaceted journey promises another captivating chapter at Project Nunway. As attendees eagerly await the unveiling of his creations, there's little doubt that Sean Stuart's blend of traditional entertainment and avant-garde fashion will leave an indelible mark once again.



Tawney Bubbles

In the vibrant sphere of balloon artistry, Tawney Bubbles, affectionately known as Tawney B, has carved a niche that's as unique as it is breathtaking. Rather than the familiar shapes of animals or basic accessories, Tawney's canvases are extravagant dresses—each a testament to her unparalleled skill and imagination. From dresses reminiscent of fairy tale enchantments to those pushing the envelope in avant-garde design, she effortlessly transforms latex into fashion masterpieces.

But it's not just about balloons. Tawney challenges the very perception of what's feasible with such a deceptively simple medium. Every twist, knot, and curve she crafts speaks of an artistry that transcends conventional design. Her work is a symphony of colors and forms, showcasing the limitless potential lying within humble balloons when sculpted by a master's hands.

Yet, Tawney's contributions to art aren't restricted to her creations alone. Passionate about nurturing the creative spirit, she has taken on the role of a mentor, guiding eager learners through workshops. Her aim? To unlock their latent potential and inspire them to push boundaries, just as she does with every piece she crafts.

Tawney Bubbles is more than just a balloon artist. She's an innovator, educator, and, above all, a dreamer. With each creation, she reminds the world of the magic one can weave, turning the ordinary into the extraordinary, and defying all expectations.



Sister Coco B. Touchindawood

Sister Coco B. Touchindawood, often recognized by her distinctive style and commitment, is an integral pillar of the First Coast Sisters in Jacksonville, Florida, where she serves as the Abbess and Mistress of Novices.

Her costume-making journey can be traced back to New Orleans (1988-1996), mentored by the distinguished Jim Schexnayder, ASID. This vibrant chapter of her life saw her association with Amon-Ra and Armenia's, two prominent gay Carnival Krewes. Her spectacular Mardi Gras costumes were not just creations but became centerpieces at the Krewes' Balle Masques.

No stranger to the limelight, Sr. CoCo boasts an impressive track record with Nunways. Out of her six participations, she clinched victory in Yuma and Vegas and, in a nod to her expertise, served as a judge in Vegas's previous edition.

Beyond the sequins and feathers, Sr. CoCo wears another important hat — that of an RN in the ER at Jacksonville's military base. Her heart for service extends further: she crafts intricate feather back pieces and collars, becoming a go-to for drag kings and queens.

This year, she's making a spirited return to the Nunway competition. But her purpose transcends personal accolades; she's driven to bolster the Sin Sity Sisters' fundraising for the ADAP program. As the curtains rise, the audience eagerly anticipates the magic Sr. CoCo is set to weave once again.

Jesse Santos

Jesse Santos, with a storied 20-year career in entertainment and production, is a force to be reckoned with. Touring with music legends like Britney Spears, Pink, and Madonna, he witnessed the magic of the spotlight. But behind the scenes, a deeper passion was kindled. Under the mentorship of elite stylists from tours, TV, and film, Jesse transitioned from the main stage to the realm of visual creativity, birthing his unique fashion sensibilities.

His rich experiences didn't stop at tours. For over a decade, Jesse's distinctive touch adorned Paul Mitchell systems' MainStage Hair Shows. His expertise, paired with his global experiences, made him an indispensable asset to their global runway and editorial teams.

Las Vegas, with its pulsating energy, became Jesse's home base. Here, he seamlessly merged creativity with corporate strategy, leading campaigns and building a formidable team, all while nurturing his brand's growth.

At Project Nunway, anticipate a masterful fusion of the past and present. Jesse presents a concept reminiscent of an era gone by, yet innovatively reimagined—an unconventional mixtape. As the lights dim and the show begins, attendees can expect a journey through time, art, and Jesse Santos's unparalleled vision.



Victor Rodriguez

Victor Rodriguez stands at the forefront of graphic communications, having sculpted branding campaigns for an array of clients, from established giants to budding startups. At the helm of his studio, eurie creative, he's lent his creativity to numerous non-profits, including The Smith Center, The Science Festival, and JDRF Juvenile Diabetes Foundation. However, his work with afan Aid for AIDS of Nevada and the Sin Sity Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence holds a cherished spot in his portfolio.

A particular highlight for Victor is the annual Project Nunway. His association with the event is multifaceted: he's championed its promotion, co-produced it, curated its panel of judges, and even graced the judging seat himself. These roles underscore his deep commitment and multifarious talents.

Recognition for Victor's work spans various domains. He's garnered accolades in graphic design, communications, and advertising, clinching top honors like Best of Show. The local chapter of AIGA acknowledged his contributions by dubbing him the "AIGA Ambassador of the Arts," while the IABC International Association of Business Communicators in Las Vegas honored him as their "Communicator of the Year."

But Victor's creativity isn't limited to graphic design. An aficionado of androgynous fashion, he views Project Nunway as more than just an event; it's a challenge that beckons him to push his boundaries, merging his professional expertise with his personal style ethos.

FRIDAY OCTOBER 6TH 8pm

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MISS FABULOUS 2018 **MONIQUE NORELL**

MISS GAY USofA CLASSIC 2023 **MALAYSIA KENDATTA**

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special.usps.com/testkits

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Alexis Park



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Hypnosis Unleashed offers a truly unique hypnotic experience every evening. You can volunteer to be the star or sit back and laugh watching your friends. No one gets embarrassed and everyone has fun at Hypnosis Unleashed, THE vegas hypnosis show.



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Puppetry of the Penis

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Erotic Heritage Museum



Chase Brown's Vegas Country

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Notoriety Live



RuPaul's Drag Race Live!

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Flamingo Las Vegas



Diva Royale

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Notoriety Live



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The Strat



Chippendales

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Rio



Spice Wannabe

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Youth & Family Services
Recovery Support Groups
Community Groups & Programs
Special Events

thecenterlv.org | 702.802.5432 | 401 S. Maryland Pkwy

LGBTQ+ Resources

THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY CENTER OF SOUTHERN NEVADA
thecenterlv.org

ACLU
aclunv.org

ADL
lasvegas.adl.org

BEARS LAS VEGAS
bears.lv.org

COMMUNITY COUNSELING CENTER OF SOUTHERN NEVADA
cccfsn.org

ENCIRCLE
encircletogether.org

HENDERSON PRIDE
hhendersonpride.org

HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN
hrc.org

IMPERIAL ROYAL SOVEREIGN COURT OF THE DESERT EMPIRE
desertempire.org

LAMBDA BUSINESS ASSOCIATION
lambdalv.com

LAS VEGAS MEN'S CHORUS
lvmenschorus.org

LAS VEGAS PRIME TIMERS
lasvegasprimetimers.com

LAS VEGAS TRANSPRIDE
lasvegastranspride.org

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

LEGACY COUNSELING
legacycounselingandworkforceconnections.com

MAMA DRAGONS
mamadragons.org

THE PRIDE TREE
thepridetree.lv.com

SILVER STATE EQUALITY
silverstateequality.org

YOUNG: EQUAL
youngequal.org



HIV Resources

AID FOR AIDS OF NEVADA (AFAN)
afanlv.org

AIDS HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION (AHF)
aidshealth.org

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

HUNTRIDGE FAMILY CLINIC
huntridgefamilyclinic.org

SOUTHERN NEVADA HEALTH DISTRICT
southernnevadahealthdistrict.org

UMC
umcsn.com

Email info@qlifemedia.com to add your organization to our directory.

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"The Marquis de Sade is considered by LGBTQ+ scholars to be one of the first authors to write about homosexuality as being as 'normal' as heterosexuality, long before Oscar Wilde's time," said Jana Wimer, ABANDON co-writer and director. "The ABANDON cast has several remarkable members of the LGBTQ+ community and it's truly an honor to work alongside an amazing organization such as The Center to help empower the community and further promote inclusion for all."



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Bath Houses



ENTOURAGE

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KUMA

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