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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This issue is dedicated to the organizations and people that do "the good work."

This month we spotlight local non-profits doing great things to impact Las Vegas.

Each month, we're both proud to support Mondays Dark. Now in our 21st month, the show has raised over \$200,000 for local charities. Catch this amazing night of entertainment the 3rd Monday of each month at The Hard Rock. Read more about some of the organizations Mondays Dark has supported over the past 2 years.

Elections are just 15 months away, and already Hillary Clinton has garnered the lead among LGBTQ voters.

Solutions Recovery and Community Counseling Center talk about how they help LGBTQ individuals with substance abuse issues.

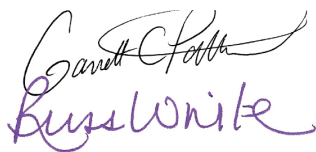
Gary Costa recaps the 29th Annual Ribbon of Life, and we look forward to the 29th Annual Black & White Party later this month.

The Center continues to evolve as a cornerstone of the community, and Immigrant Justice Initiative informs us about the challenges LGBTQ immigrants face.

And coming up in October, Las Vegas hosts the World Gay Rodeo.

Finding a way to give back is easy. Everyone can contribute in their own unique way. We use our talents in technology, media, and social media to help many organizations year round.

This month, we just wanted to acknowledge the efforts of a few of the great organizations in town.



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THE LINQ

Former Imperial Palace transforms into Strip Hot Spot

[by Michael Barbieri myvegasobsession.com]

Directly across Las Vegas Boulevard from the enormous Caesar's Palace property, you'll find a new, very modern resort and casino that has actually been there for years. Welcome to The Linq!

Formerly known as the Imperial Palace, the building's exterior resembled a large pagoda, with recessed neon lighting giving it a pleasant blue glow. The decor was Asian in nature, and the casino had a fun, funky vibe. One of its claims to fame were the "dealer-tainers" - cast members from the Legends celebrity impersonator show that had been trained to deal blackjack - "Janet Jackson" or "The Blues Brothers" might be dealing your hands, and would often mount a platform in the middle of the pit, to perform.

While the casino was likable, however, the guest rooms were another story - shabby, with outdated fixtures and no actual closets; only bare shelves and a bar on which to hang clothes. The

bathrooms had cracked mirrors, dingy, yellowed marble around the sinks, and inadequate showers. After staying there, I called it a glorified Motel 6.

Well, all of that has changed for the better! In 2013, after massive renovations, The Linq opened officially. Gone is the pagoda, and in its place is a sleek silver façade featuring a huge LED "vortex" of shifting colors and patterns, and enormous LED screens advertising the attractions found inside. And while the property may have lost some of its boisterous charm, the new interiors boast clean lines and bright colors, making it feel adult and contemporary.

Due to a delay in my flight, I arrived at The Linq later than expected. Luckily, it was still early in the day, and the line for check-in wasn't long. I requested a room with a Strip view, and the nice woman behind the reception desk found me one, but warned that it faced an alley between The Linq and Harrah's, with a stage on which live bands played every night until 3 am. She then offered me one toward the back of the hotel, with a nice view, but more importantly, it would be quiet!



Photo Credit: Bryan Steffy

I had a Deluxe Room with 2 queen beds, and a wonderful view of The High Roller, the 550 foot observation Ferris wheel behind the hotel. The decor was spare, but modern and new, with a streamlined wall unit, which included desk space. There was a 47-inch flat screen TV, a comfy chair and small table, a mini-fridge, and an efficient closet unit, with a pastel blue velvet curtain to hide it from sight. The bathroom was small, but designed for efficient use of space, with a sliding door, and a shower done in an almost European style - only a half-wall of glass separating it from the rest of the room. Luckily, there was also a shower curtain to prevent splashing. Overall, the room was not exactly luxurious, but it was very comfortable, clean, and thoughtfully appointed.

Downstairs, the casino's cream colored marble floors divided up the 118,000 square feet of gaming space, with vivid red carpeting adding

pops of color everywhere. Directly across from reception, was 3535, Las Vegas' only infusion bar, featuring a variety of flavor infused liquors, and cocktails like the Wat-A-Pear, with watermelon and rosemary infused vodka, the El Fuego, with mango-citrus and jalapeño infused tequila, and the Chai Peanut Butter Cup, which is a must-try! Restaurants include Chayo Mexican Kitchen +

The casino's cream colored marble floors divided up the 118,000 square feet of gaming space, with vivid red carpeting adding pops of color everywhere

Tequila Bar, and Hash House A Go-Go, home of "twisted farm food!" Nightlife options include Brooklyn Bowl - an 80,000 square foot bowling alley, music venue, nightclub, and restaurant combined, and O'Sheas - an Irish themed "casino within a casino" with

live music, an outdoor bar, and host Lucky the Leprechaun! For old car buffs, there's The Auto Collections - an exotic car showroom featuring over 250 antique and historic automobiles. Anyone looking for shows will find the magic of Mat Franco, the comedy of Jeff Civillico, or Frank



Olivia Newton-John arrives at the Linq with Pink Ladies and Chippendales

Photo Credit: Denise Truscello



Chayo Mexican Kitchen + Tequila Bar at The LINQ

Marino's Divas Las Vegas, the best drag revue I've seen, with Marino as the late Joan Rivers, and a cast of female impersonators portraying Britney Spears, Madonna, Cher, Lady GaGa, and Tina Turner, among others - a spectacle not to be missed!

Need to recover from all the fun? Try the newly refurbished Linq Pool, featuring lily pad daybeds, cabana rooms, and events like Champagne Sundays, or the Spa at The Linq, a soothing space where you can be pampered with massages, body treatments, facials, or a session in their Himalayan Salt Therapy Cave, which is not only relaxing, but helps with respiratory ailments like asthma.

Lastly, there's the Linq Promenade, an outdoor shopping and entertainment plaza, with casual eateries like The Haute Doggery, food shops like Starbucks and Sprinkles Cupcakes, retail outlets like Pier 30 and 12 AM Run, and of course, the High Roller Ferris Wheel. The Promenade is a great place for food, fun, and people watching!

I had a terrific stay at The Linq - cocktails at 3535, late-night dinner at Hash House A Go-Go, Frank Marino's fabulous drag revue, and a comfortable, quiet room. I even won some money at one of their slot machines! The only warning I'd give potential visitors, would be to arrive early in the day, to avoid long lines at reception. Beyond that, however, I'd recommend The Linq for anyone who wants to stay in the heart of the Strip, and affordable, at that!



Celebrate your wedding on The High Roller

Photo Credit: Denise Truscello

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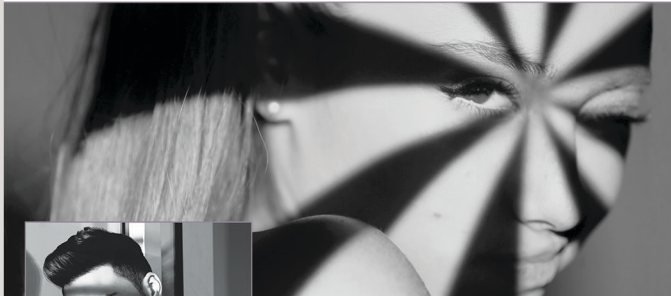
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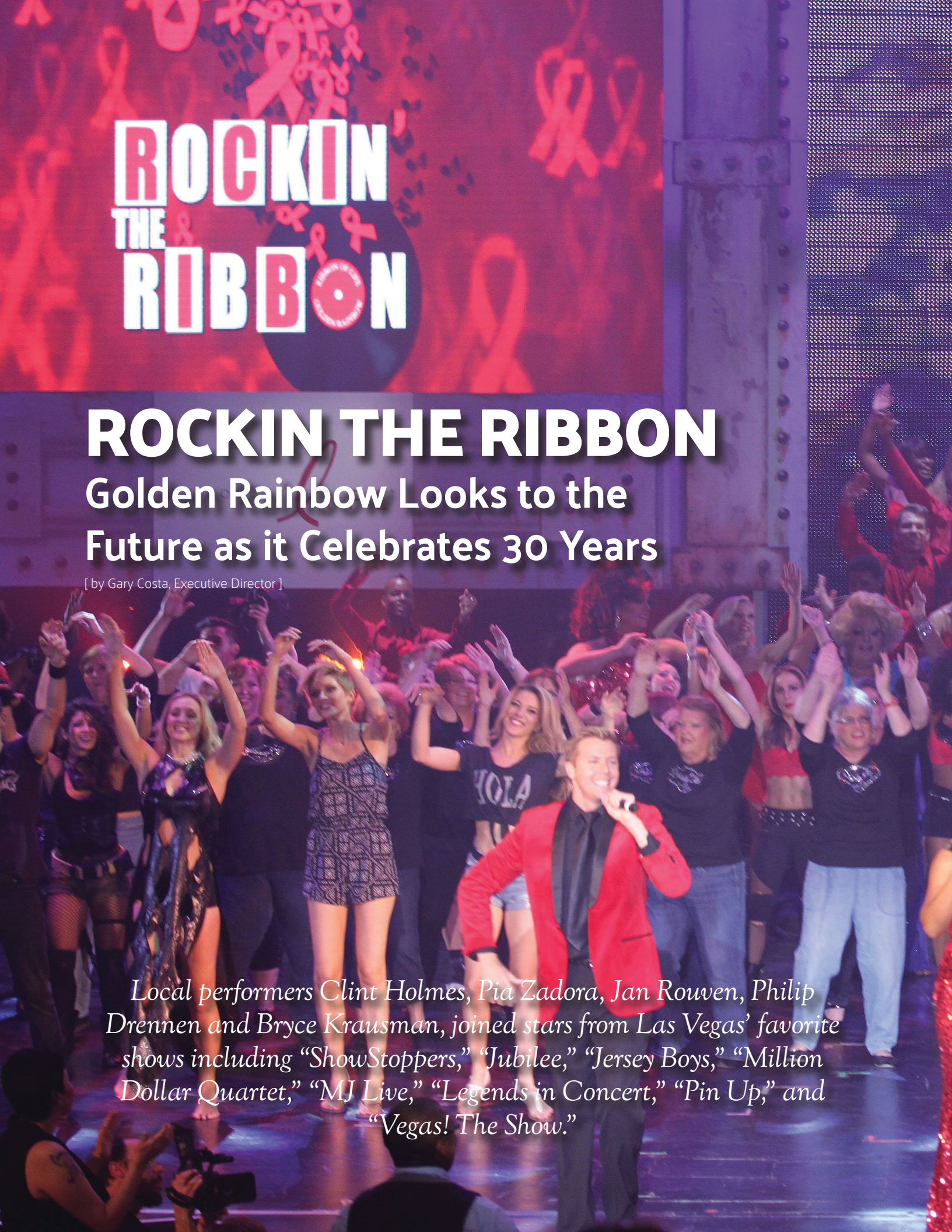
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ROCKIN' THE RIBBON

ROCKIN' THE RIBBON

Golden Rainbow Looks to the Future as it Celebrates 30 Years

[by Gary Costa, Executive Director]

Local performers Clint Holmes, Pia Zadora, Jan Rouven, Philip Drennen and Bryce Krausman, joined stars from Las Vegas' favorite shows including "ShowStoppers," "Jubilee," "Jersey Boys," "Million Dollar Quartet," "MJ Live," "Legends in Concert," "Pin Up," and "Vegas! The Show."



ROCKIN' THE RIBBON

RIBBON OF *Life*

When a group of Las Vegas “showkids” got together in 1986 to discuss putting on a show to raise money for their fellow performers who had AIDS, they never imagined that 30 years later there would still be a need to do so.

Photo Credit: Ira Kuzma / Ira Kuzma Photography



Gary Costa, Golden Rainbow Executive Director, at the 29th annual Ribbon of Life

That first show, titled “Golden Rainbow” was held at Bally’s on July 11, 1987 and started a Las Vegas Entertainment tradition that continues to this day. Originally a fund raiser for the newly founded Aid for AIDS Nevada (AFAN), the Ribbon of Life (as a poster from the 1989 show described it) is an “entertainment extravaganza featuring performers from every hot show on the Las Vegas Strip”.

This past June, Golden Rainbow held the 29th Annual Ribbon of Life at The NEW Tropicana Las Vegas. And living up to its reputation, it featured some of the best performers from the hottest shows in Las Vegas. The production featured a wide variety of rock and roll themed numbers and was hosted by Sean McAllister (“MORE” and “MORE Access”) and Edie (“Zumanity”).

Local performers Clint Holmes, Pia Zadora, Jan Rouven, Philip Drennen and Bryce Krausman, joined stars from Las Vegas’ favorite shows

including “ShowStoppers,” “Jubilee,” “Jersey Boys,” “Million Dollar Quartet,” “MJ Live,” “Legends in Concert,” “Pin Up,” and “Vegas! The Show.”

For almost 30 years Golden Rainbow has been raising money through this annual event to provide housing and financial assistance to people living with HIV/AIDS in Southern Nevada. This year, over \$125,000 in contributions, silent auction proceeds and in-kind donations was realized.

Golden Rainbow currently provides long-term housing for over 25 households comprised of men, women and children with HIV/AIDS. In addition, we serve over 300 individuals annually with emergency rental assistance, utilities, health-related costs, childcare, transportation and many other expenses. Over 75% of our clients have worked or currently work in the entertainment industry.

Due to advances in medications and to the

As the epidemic continues to evolve, Golden Rainbow must rise to these new challenges.

availability of better medical care through the Affordable Care Act, our clients are living longer lives. Some of our clients who were facing death as little as 5 years ago are now seeing an improvement in their health.

A recent survey taken of Clark County residents living with HIV rated Housing and Transportation as some of their most urgent needs. Because of this important feedback, Golden Rainbow is committed to continuing to provide housing and transportation to our clients in need, especially those on disability or those unable to work.



Next year, Ribbon of Life will produce its 30th annual show.

We also recognize the need to provide our “healthier” clients with the education and tools necessary to thrive and survive in this new age of the epidemic.

A majority of our clients are unemployed or under-employed. And for those clients who want to return to work, many of them face a stigma associated with HIV. Most of our clients now have huge gaps in their resumes and many employers are afraid to hire someone who has been unable to work due to health issues. Technology has improved at such a rapid pace that even those clients who are now able to work find themselves woefully unprepared to re-enter the workforce.

Recently, we have made a re-commitment to the community to strengthen our education programs so that all people living with HIV/AIDS can be empowered to improve their lives; to come out of isolation and reenter society.

Together with our community partners, AFAN, The AIDS Healthcare Foundation, The Center and The Community Counseling Center; Golden Rainbow is launching new programs that will provide information and opportunities for our

clients to take charge of their health and learn how to better navigate their medical care systems.

And we are working with Goodwill Industries to provide job skills and computer training so that our clients who want to go back to work, can be competitive in the constantly evolving job market.

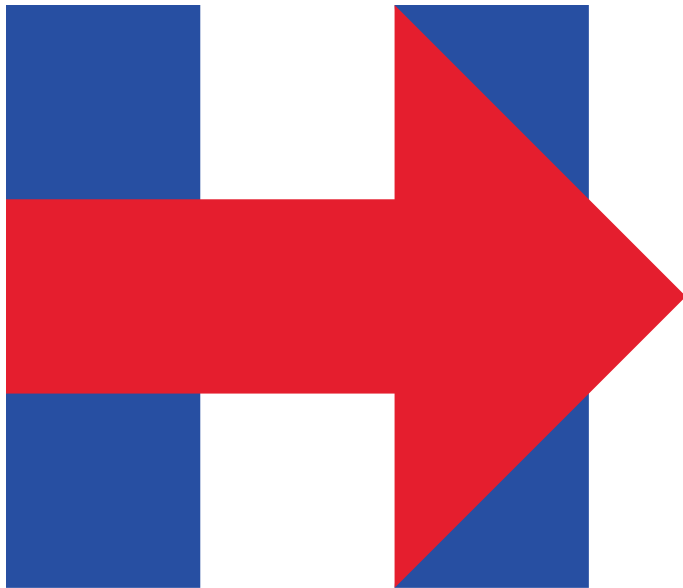
As the epidemic continues to evolve, Golden Rainbow must rise to these new challenges.

This summer we will launch a series of event and activities to celebrate our 30th year in existence. Join us as we celebrate our many advancements the fight against HIV/AIDS and also to remember those who are no longer with us. There are many exciting plans for the organization including a new office space; some changes to our real estate portfolio and our 30th Annual Ribbon of Life which is already confirmed for June 12, 2016 at The NEW Tropicana Las Vegas!

When that first group of concerned individuals formed Golden Rainbow back in 1987, they did so with the motto “An Achievable Dream”. Our founders made a commitment to assure that all people with HIV/AIDS would have a safe place to call home and provided a helping hand in their time of need. But sadly, our job is not finished. Our “Dream” is yet to be “Achieved”. With the community’s continued support we can get closer to making that dream a reality.



For More Information on Golden Rainbow
Visit gay.vegas/goldenrainbow



HILLARY 2016

Gay rights are human rights, and human rights are gay rights” said Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State, while advocating for protections and respect for the LGBTQ community at the State Department, throughout the United States, and across the globe.

During that speech in Geneva, Clinton summed up her position on gay rights and staked out a claim as a champion for equality. At the State Department, she worked with President Obama to combat human rights abuses against LGBTQ individuals, treat all State Department employees equally, and line up support from international non-profits to improve the lives of LGBTQ people.

Now, Hillary Clinton is running for President of the United States, and she is highlighting her record and message of equality fighting for gay rights in right here in Nevada.

As an early caucus state, Nevada is uniquely positioned to receive serious attention from candidates running for president. For both Democrats and Republicans, Nevada is one of the first four states in the nation to vote in each

party’s primary. We are also a battleground state: that is, a state that is capable of swinging the result of the general election, too.

Clinton’s campaign has stressed that they understand Nevada’s importance in the 2016 election cycle. They are leading the pack in terms of organizational strength on the ground in Nevada, with organizers working from Vegas to Reno and everywhere in between. And Hillary’s team has been engaging proactively with different constituencies to hear their concerns and listen to their needs.

“The Hillary for Nevada team cares about engaging all communities on their terms and treating everyone with respect,” said Nevada State Director Emmy Ruiz at a recent Hillary Clinton LGBTQ House Party in Las Vegas. “We are finding voters where they are, in their neighborhoods and online, and working to reach out to them every day.”

By hosting dozens of house parties across the state, the Hillary for Nevada team has focused on the unique needs and voices of diverse communities, including the LGBTQ community. At a recent house party hosted by LGBTQ advocate Cory Sadler, senior staff from the Hillary for Nevada campaign held a listening session that engaged attendees on issues from marriage equality to health care and small business.



Clinton's campaign kicked off in Nevada with an LGBTQ House Party

"It's early in the election cycle, but it feels like the Clinton campaign is firing on full cylinders already in Nevada," said Sadler. "They're clearly taking nothing for granted, and these house parties have been a great way to get everyone together to talk about what matters."

As a U.S. senator Clinton voted against a constitutional amendment to bar same-sex marriage throughout the country. She pushed legislation like the Employment Non-Discrimination Act. She recently called out Republicans for attempting to allow companies to discriminate against LGBTQ individuals in the name of religious freedom.

In a statement celebrating the Supreme Court's decision supporting marriage equality in June, Clinton seemingly took aim at Republican candidates and detractors Ted Cruz and Scott Walker, saying that "...instead of trying to turn

back the clock, they should be joining us in saying loudly and clearly, 'No, no' to discrimination once and for all."

It's early in the election cycle, but it feels like the Clinton campaign is firing on full cylinders already in Nevada

For the LGBTQ community in Las Vegas, Clinton's campaign promises to stay active and vigilant.

"We celebrated the Supreme Court's decision, but we know

we still have a lot to fight for," said Tim Hogan, the Nevada Communications Director for the campaign.

The LGBTQ community must continue to speak out, too, and truly harness the momentum behind improving the lives of everyone in our community. If recent months are a preview of things to come, we will find the Clinton campaign active in Nevada and in our corner as well.



"My daughter, Sarah was diagnosed with high risk, ALL Leukemia just six days before her 4th birthday. Since day one, Candlelighters has helped our family immensely, keeping us from the intense feeling of isolation, providing an incredible support system, social activities, inviting us to events where Sarah can be a kid and forget about cancer. Sarah actually looks forward and no longer fears her doctor appointments and procedures knowing Candlelighters will be there to play with her, give her hope, and make her feel loved. We are forever grateful for what they have given us, a light at the end of the tunnel. We cannot wait to pay it forward someday, as they have truly impacted our lives"

– Cindy, mother of Sarah, age 4.

This is just one message from a family who has benefitted from Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Foundation of Nevada (Candlelighters). It is because of Candlelighters that kids like Sarah and her family find encouragement, hope and strength through the difficult journey of childhood cancer.

The Candlelighters mission is to provide support, education, hope and advocacy through programs and services for children and adolescents with cancer, their families and the professionals who care for them. Their core programs address the vital needs affecting nearly every diagnosed child, (birth to age 21) and their family as they pass through the different stages of the disease and cancer treatment: diagnosis, treatment, recovery, potential relapse, residual

medical problems due to treatment, and, regrettably in certain cases, death.

Their agency is unique in Nevada with their focus on one disease (childhood cancer) and specifically serve children diagnosed with cancer, their siblings and parents. With more than 30 programs and services, Candlelighters serves more than 125 families per year and more than 600 children (diagnosed child and sibling combined). These programs provide mental and emotional health services in outpatient settings, such as weekly visits from Candlelighters staff to local hospitals and clinic where kids receive treatment.

Candlelighters provides emergency financial assistance for families struggling to cope with the surmounting expenses of treatment, the program helps families pay a one-time mortgage payment or utility bills. Most treatment is done in southern Nevada, but some circumstances necessitate travel for treatment, this is where Candlelighters steps in. Candlelighters assists families through this travel for treatment process, partnering with local agencies and/or providing them with hotel stays, gas cards and meal reimbursements to make it possible for families to afford this necessary stay away from home.

Candlelighters provides a social outlet for families to connect with one another, outside of hospital walls. Throughout the year, the organization hosts special gatherings like a Halloween Bash, Christmas Party and Spring Fling, creating a safe and social environment for



kids and families. Candlelighters also secures donors to support the Adopt a Family Program at Christmas time for more than 50 families that need a little extra help or maybe have just lost a child to cancer.

Another notable program is Camp Independent Firefly, a medically-supervised camp in Big Bear, Calif., for diagnosed children and their siblings. It is an overnight camp that provides the adventure of summer camp where kids can be kids and forget about cancer.

Sadly, approximately 15 kids will die each year from childhood cancer. This reality is emotionally and financially devastating on families. Candlelighters strives to assist families during their tremendous loss, helping with funeral expenses and planning.

After nearly four decades in operation, Candlelighters is the first and oldest nonprofit in Nevada, helping thousands of families navigate the unknown road of childhood cancer. Their focus is providing the best family-centered care possible to families affected by childhood cancer, to the diagnosed child as well as their sibling. Candlelighters provides all programs and services

to families at no cost.

Candlelighters is funded solely through community support, they do not receive government or state funding and depend largely on fundraising events to generate much needed funds. Without the generous support from the southern Nevada community, Candlelighters would not be able to make a difference in the life of a child with cancer.

If you would like to help local families who have children diagnosed with cancer, please call 702-737-1919 or visit the Candlelighters website at CandleLightersNV.org.





This October, The Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Southern Nevada (known to most simply as The Center) will celebrate 22 years of serving the LGBTQ community of Las Vegas. As one committee of board and staff has been preparing to honor this anniversary at the annual Honorarium event, another has been actively polling the community to compile demographics and learn of current needs and desires. The data collected through three short in-person surveys and one longer online survey is being used to craft a three-year strategic plan for The Center's expansion of programs and services.

Among those working tirelessly to take The Center to the next level are CEO Michael Dimengo, Director of Operations André Wade and Director of Development Walter Reed, all of

whom have joined the staff within the past year and offer a fresh perspective on the organization with new goals and new ideas. Each has been eager to listen to our community and learn what they want and need from The Center.

"There have been key learnings that I have acquired since becoming a part of The Center.," Dimengo says. "First, I am grateful to have learned the needs and desires of many members of the transgender community. Members of the transgender community are some of the most misunderstood persons. In meeting with many of them and learning their stories, they have commanded my respect. I also believe that the misunderstandings of the transgender community emanate right from others in our LGBTQ community. All of us need to take time to learn about each other. We are part of this rich



rainbow of diversity. It is mutual respect and appreciation that binds us together. We need to take time to learn from one another.”

“One clear demonstration of this is how a variety of lesbian leaders talked to me about their experiences of primary healthcare and preventive healthcare services. One woman after the next told me discouraging stories of discrimination and disrespect as they encountered medical professionals in the community where they were obtaining assistance. It’s sad. Healthcare for the lesbian community is an acute need. It has motivated

The Center is the ‘go-to’ for all things LGBTQ; therefore, we have to be nimble in our ability to respond to the various and diverse needs of the community.

André Wade, Directory of Operations

me to seek additional resources and do additional planning to address the healthcare needs of our lesbian community first, while addressing the needs of healthcare among our other constituent populations.

“Another key learning for me among the many things that I have learned is centered around our youth. I’m particularly delighted every time I meet with the members of our QVolution youth program or meet with members of our Vegas MPowerment Project. I’m energized by our young people’s energy and ideas. I see so much hope and promise for them. But, at the same time,

not until I came here to The Center did I learn about the challenges that these young people are experiencing in the lack of acceptance that some endure, in the bullying that they have to contend with, in the disenfranchisement that many experience from their families and close relatives. Not until I came to The Center did I learn of the gravity of youth homelessness—that LGBTQ youth homelessness is a significant piece of all youth homelessness in our community. Something has to be done to address that.”

As director of operations, Wade oversees the program managers who work closely every day with the hundreds of LGBTQ individuals who attend regular group meetings at The Center. Many come in at other times seeking help with housing, clothing, financial assistance, connection to medical care and often life-saving advice. He has learned through his team the challenges the community faces and the obstacles his own staff have to overcome to adequately serve this population.

“Something I intrinsically knew [prior to joining the staff], but now better understand, is how much The Center means to the community at-large. And that The Center is the ‘go-to’ for all things LGBTQ; therefore, we have to be nimble in our ability to respond to the various and diverse needs of the community. I’ve definitely come to understand that we are a small and mighty bunch who need a few more hours in the day to accomplish more. But we do what we can!” Wade says.

As The Center develops goals and courses of action for the future, Wade says, “We have a lot of great things happening, but we recognize that there are a lot of people in need. We’d like to be able to provide more services in house, and refer out less, so that we can decrease the time frame from referring someone to a particular service to them accessing the service. We believe that

moving in the space of health care is one road we may travel down. We’d like to ensure that more LGBTQ (with an emphasis on the T and the L) have access to culturally competent and sensitive healthcare services by us providing those services ourselves. Additionally, we believe addressing the youth homelessness issue by way of a shelter or housing component will position us to serve more people in emergency need, especially when other shelter and/or housing are full or people

are unwilling to access particular shelter and/or housing due to lack of LGBTQ competency.

“Additionally, we want to ensure that we can provide well-rounded services

such as mental health,

those that support economic well-being, family-centered services and services that continuously focus on the needs of the transgender and gender non-conforming population. Lastly, we want to make sure that all of our programs and services are accessible to communities of color. We hope to, through collaboration with others, build programs and services for the African-American, Latin@ and other people of color communities.”

A non-profit organization like The Center — which serves the public six days a week — relies on a variety of grants to sustain its individual programs and, in large part, personal donations both large and small to cover day-to-day operating costs. Reed knows firsthand that raising such funds is an ongoing challenge. His goal is to convert the financial support for the Opening New Doors capital campaign into The Rainbow Circle, a sustaining fundraising program that would support all of the activities of The Center.

“I believe the new three-year plan will identify areas, like the transgender community, that need more services. I think it will also show that to sustain the current and expanding level of services offered at The Center, we must develop new revenue streams around the programs and continue to develop a sustaining gifts program

“The misunderstandings of the transgender community emanate right from others in our LGBTQ community.”

Michael Dimengo, CEO



Members of the Las Vegas LGBTQ community gather at The Center to celebrate victory as the Supreme Court declares same-sex marriage the law of the land.

that ensures the stability of The Center,” Reed says.

“We have to be grateful because it was a strategic plan of some of our past leaders that put The Center on the trajectory of opening up its new home and its new building in March 2013,” Dimengo says. “As they did so, I believe one ‘unintended consequence’ was the enormous programmatic growth that we have experienced since opening our doors here. Last year alone, we saw a 62 percent increase in program participants over 2013. For continuity sake, we need to set operational goals that will harness that growth and manage it appropriately. We need to continue to develop our programming in service to the community.”



The Center invites any and all residents of and visitors to Southern Nevada to visit its facility at 401 S. Maryland Pkwy. in downtown Las Vegas and get involved in its ongoing programs and help further its goals. More information about meetings, activities, volunteer opportunities and ways to contribute can be found online at www.thecenterlv.org.

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Serving the LGBTQ Community of Nevada

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MONDAYS DARK

Vegas' Night To Give Back

In November, 2014, Rock of Ages headliner Mark Shunock launched Mondays Dark, a monthly fundraiser that brings together performers from all over Las Vegas one night a month with the simple goal of raising \$10,000 for a local charity each month.

This month, Mondays Dark will present its 21st show at its home in Vinyl at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino. Produced by a handful of dedicated volunteers, the event rapidly grew from a casually organized event to a full 501(c)3 in less than 2 years.

The show now attracts over 400 viewers each month, selling out every month. Each month features a different charity. The organization receives all proceeds from ticket sales, as well as the silent auction. Performers donate their time each month, and based on some of the recurring

performers, they love performing as much as the audiences loves coming.

The MD team selects 11 charities to work with each year and will announce the 2016 lineup at its 2nd Annual Bash inside The Joint in December where an audience of over 1,000 are expected to attend.

Three Square

Three Square Food Bank is honored to be selected as the Mondays Dark nonprofit for August. This month's performers will draw their inspiration from the soundtrack to the 1978 comedy classic "Animal House;" and this time, when someone yells "food fight," it will be because they have taken on the fight to end hunger. All of the proceeds from August's Mondays Dark, including every dollar from ticket sales and silent auction items, will go to help Three Square fight hunger in Southern Nevada. For every dollar raised, three meals go back into the community. Simply put, if Three Square can raise \$10,000 on Aug. 17, that represents 30,000 meals for those in need, from children to seniors, in Southern Nevada.

Eagerly anticipating this event, representatives from Three Square have attended Mondays Dark for the last several months. Each time, they were impressed with not only the quality of the event

– exceptional venue, exciting silent auction items, extraordinary entertainment

– but the way the audience grew in both size and engagement every month. Much of this is due to the exceptional leadership, vision and compassion of its creator, Mark Shunock.

There are high hopes for this iteration: with more than 58 percent of children in Clark County School District, or more than 186,000 students, enrolled in free or reduced-price meal programs, hunger is too significant a problem for throwing food. With 315,000 food-insecure people in our community, hunger is no laughing matter. But throw on your togas and give hunger a spanking – Aug. 17, Mondays Dark benefits Three Square, Southern Nevada's only food bank.





Blind Center of Nevada

Mondays Dark, the delightful creation of Mark Shunock, is a night like no other. While you might expect great entertainment in a city as fabulous as Las Vegas, you certainly do not expect the eclectic mix of performers and talent that is about to amaze you during a Mondays Dark event!

As wonderful as the entertainment is, nothing compares to the opportunity Mondays Dark provides to the charity-of-the-month, the evenings beneficiary. The Blind Center was delightfully overwhelmed with the opportunity to meet and share the organizations mission and story with a roomful of new faces throughout the course of the evening. Mark's generosity was evident throughout the planning process and the evening itself. He took the time to meet with us to learn about who we are and also came to the Center and help us film an opening video which included sound bites from our members. Throughout the evening he continually provided talking points about blindness, about the Center and the work that we do.

Another exciting first for the Blind Center

was the opportunity to have our very own Broken Spectacles, a six-person rock group comprised of multi-talented musicians who all happen to be legally blind, open the show! For them, the chance to perform on-stage at Vinyl inside the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino is something they will never forget!

Additionally, about 20 of our members attended the event and had a wonderful time. Throughout the evening it wasn't unusual to see several of them standing during different numbers, dancing or singing – experiencing the performance.

After all this fun and excitement, glitz and glamour, the Blind Center even profited from the proceeds of the event. You can't put a price tag on all this.

Fabulous Entertainment + Amazing Exposure + Great Marketing + Dollars Raised = Priceless





Philip Drennen and Jassen Allen perform every month as Mondays Dark's backup singers.

Las Vegas Labrador Rescue

For Las Vegas Labrador Rescue, we haven't had our featured night with Mondays Dark with Mark Shunock yet. However, we can absolutely envision how \$10,000 is going to impact our ability to save Labrador Retrievers in the future."

We are a small, volunteer-based organization devoted to rescuing, rehabilitating and re-homing Labs in the Las Vegas area. We are often faced with incredibly difficult decisions about Labs in need, balancing the medical requirements of the Lab with the desire to remain financially solvent. Without question, our darkest moments occur when we can't bring a Lab into our rescue simply because the rescue cannot afford the medical treatment that Lab needs.

In 2014, Las Vegas Labrador Rescue saved and adopted out 40 Labradors in need to southern Nevada families. While our adoption fee is \$275, on average we spent \$294.58 for each Lab on veterinary care and food. It is only by the support of individual donations that we can continue saving Labs, and we have been blessed through the years to have a great support system.

Being chosen as a featured charity for Mondays Dark, and raising \$10,000 for our rescue simply means we get to remove the question of medical

costs for any given Lab from our decision making. This means we are no longer bound by financial constraints, we are allowed to save Labs in distress, that need medical care and treatment they may not get otherwise. We can do this knowing we aren't risking our future as a rescue. As important, being a featured charity of Mondays Dark lets Las Vegas Labrador Rescue 'pay it forward', and begin our goal of giving back to the animal community through sponsorship of low cost vaccination clinics and educating the public on spay/neuter laws. In so many ways this funding is going to save animals.

We cannot describe just how incredibly wonderful this feeling is, nor can we ever fully thank Mark Shunock and Mondays Dark for recognizing our organization.

For all of us that volunteer with Las Vegas Labrador Rescue, saving Labs in need is our mission, our purpose and our greatest accomplishment. That we will now be able to save more is the just the most wonderful opportunity to happen to our organization."





Aid for AIDS Nevada

Aid for AIDS of Nevada (AFAN) was the second charitable organization that partnered with Mondays Dark back in December 2013 when it started at Body English. AFAN Executive Director Antioco Carrillo and the staff was excited for this new community endeavor from Mark Shunock as he has been a great advocate for AFAN, personally getting other “Rock of Ages” cast members involved with past AIDS Walks. Skye Dee Miles gave such an impressive performance, AFAN asked her to sing at its Black & White Party the following year. The support from the community even early on in the Mondays Dark events was an amazing indicator of what was to come. We are honored to have been one of early organizations to take part in these inspiring evenings of performances. The proceeds from the evening directly benefitted AFAN’s client services for 3,000 local men, women and children living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.



Black & White Party 2015

It's time to break out the black and white attire and dress to impress for one of Las Vegas' most anticipated events of the year. Aid for AIDS of Nevada's (AFAN) 29th Annual Black & White Party returns to The Joint at Hard Rock on Saturday, Aug. 29. Last year's event saw more than 3,000 guests help raise nearly \$130,000. The night will be packed with eye-catching fashion and entertainment from DJ Axis, Boiis, Brandon Godfrey, Maren Wade, The Sound Collage and The Perry Twins. Eat, drink and dance the night away with delicious dining options from Hexx, FU, Culinary Dropout, Pink Taco, Ferraro's Brio and 35 Steak, as well as top-shelf liquor brands from Back Bar USA. The International Special Events Society Las Vegas Chapter (ISES-LV) will visually transform the Joint with over-the-top decor and guests can bid on silent auction dining and entertainment packages. The ticket price also includes admission to the after party at Piranha Nightclub and the following day's Temptation Sundays pool party. All proceeds from the night will go to AFAN's client services to benefit children and adults in the Las Vegas community living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. Tickets are \$50 GA, \$130 VIP with early entry available now at afanlv.org.

AUG 29

Hard Rock Hotel & Casino

Purchase your tickets at afanlv.org

afan
Aid for AIDS of Nevada

2015
Black & White
party



Keep Memory Alive

In its 20-year history, Keep Memory Alive has raised more than \$200 million for healthcare delivery in Las Vegas. But we haven't done it alone: An impressive array of individuals and organizations has approached us with ideas for creating and hosting events to benefit Keep Memory Alive and Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health. These events have spanned dinners, golf outings, networking mixers and happy hours as well as donations organized in lieu of gifts to commemorate important personal events, such as birthdays.

Among our favorites is Mondays Dark. They made fundraising truly “fun” and easy, too.

Often, these generous event organizers are emotionally connected with our mission, having been personally affected by brain disease. For others, it's an opportunity to showcase their talents or their companies' wares while raising funds in a meaningful way.

Large or small, third-party events such as Mondays Dark are important to our friend-raising and fundraising mission, offering Keep Memory Alive new venues in which to engage with people who might become ambassadors, donors or patients.

Keep Memory Alive supports third-party hosts such as Mondays Dark in ways that make sense for both the host and the beneficiary. In advance,

we might spread the word to our constituents via email blasts and social media; the day of the event, we

might provide brochures, promotional items or a speaker to thank attendees and say a few words about the research being conducted at the Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health.

“We’re so grateful for Mondays Dark’s support,” says Anna Robins, Senior Director of Special Events for Keep Memory Alive. “At some point in our lifetimes, everyone will be touched by Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, multiple sclerosis or other insidious diseases treated at the Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health. If we all work together now, maybe we can find a way to improve brain health and stop the devastation caused by these diseases.”

If you would like to host an event to benefit Keep Memory Alive, we would like to hear from you at 702.263.9797 or events@keepmemoryalive.org. If you are interested in attending an event, please view the “Upcoming Events” section of www.keepmemoryalive.org.





ORION Cancer Foundation

Mondays Dark recently brought a hearty dosage of light to cancer patients throughout Southern Nevada.

To fill a local need that was underserved, Comprehensive Cancer Centers of Nevada founded the ORION Cancer Foundation in 2010. The nonprofit provides financial assistance to Southern Nevada cancer patients, regardless of where they are receiving treatment.

Long hospital stays and missed work can cause financial distress, so ORION helps pay for patients' living expenses, including such items as mortgage/rent, utilities, transportation and groceries. Patients have a difficult time focusing on treatment and getting well when they are worried about paying their bills. Eligible applicants may receive up to \$1,500 within a 12-month timeframe.

To date, the nonprofit has assisted more than 445 patients with more than \$307,000 in financial support. ORION is a guardian angel for Southern Nevadans in their most severe times of need...

and is always looking for new ways to raise funds to impact even more patients in Southern Nevada.



In June, ORION was the benefitting nonprofit for Mondays Dark, and, in one magical evening at Vinyl Las Vegas, raised nearly \$10,000. The Motown-themed evening featured more than 25 silent auction items from generous community partners, a roster of headliners from the Las Vegas Strip and a backdrop of vivacious tunes to keep the crowd swooning all night long.

Most importantly, 100 percent of the proceeds went directly to cancer patients in-need throughout Southern Nevada. Not only did Mondays Dark provide an impactful evening for ORION and the Vinyl crowd... but a sense of much-needed optimism for those in our community who need it the most.



Mondays Dark is produced each month by a small, dedicated team lead by Mark Shunock, including Cheryl Daro, Denise Truscello, Betty Ann and Bob Golden, Joy Schaefer, Hannah Dorfman, Makayla Marcotte, Russ White, Garrett Pattiani, and An'Drea Dupper. The monthly events could not be possible without the support of many others throughout the community as well as annual and ongoing sponsorship from Chapman Dodge, Greenspun Media Group, Rock of Ages, Leo, Gay.Vegas, and Hard Rock Hotel & Casino.

HomeAid Southern Nevada

HomeAid Southern Nevada is a local nonprofit that is building new lives for Southern Nevada's homeless through housing and community outreach projects. We first met Mark Shunock and were introduced to the Monday's Dark concept at our annual fundraiser, Project Playhouse Pet Edition, a luxury pet house event that raises money to build shelters and facilities for the homeless in our community. Mark's energy and passion for giving back was apparent, so we began discussing Monday's Dark and how passionate performers were to give back for great causes. The HomeAid team immediately loved the idea of Monday's Dark and had to get involved to help raise vital funds for organizations supporting our community.

On November 16th, Monday's Dark will be hosting a benefit show for HomeAid Southern Nevada and all of the money raised will be going

to be build housing and shelters in

2016. November is also Hunger & Homeless Awareness month, so HomeAid is especially excited to partner with Monday's Dark to help bring awareness for the over 10,000 people who have nowhere to sleep and do not know where their next meal will come from. Without incredible people like Mark Shunock and his concept of the Monday's Dark benefit shows, organizations like ours wouldn't be able to continue to help those most in need. The money raised is vital to continue helping the homeless and at risk and how better to serve them than by partnering with other amazing organizations to bring awareness for the cause!





Rudy Foundation

The Rudy Foundation supports communities and provides scholarships in education, sports, and the performing arts. My true purpose with the Rudy Foundation is to develop leaders and create mentors with class, integrity and character whose behavior will transform lives and be an example to all who have an opportunity to interact with them and receive their mentorship. The goal is to impact generations and create true superheroes in our universe today. "When we meet someone we need to look them in the eye, shake their hand, find the greatness in them, focus on that, and make sure that we leave them feeling better about themselves than before we met" Cheryl Ruettiger, Executive Director Rudy Foundation

The Rudy Foundation is honored to be a part of MONDAY'S DARK. MONDAY'S DARK helped the Rudy Foundation to provide scholarships to

five deserving students across the country. We are proud to assist these kids

in pursuing their dreams and helping them to become leaders. Mark Shunock has a magical energy that attracts greatness! MONDAY'S DARK is a true success because Mark has the heartbeat to truly help others. His organization has donated thousands of dollars in it's first year to non-profits across the country enabling them to fulfill their missions. I would work with Mark Shunock on any project, any day, to help make a positive impact in the lives of others. Thank YOU so much Mark, and MONDAY'S DARK for you love, talent, and commitment.



LAS VEGAS HOSTS WORLD GAY RODEO FINALS

The World Gay Rodeo Finals (WGRF) competition is the spectacular culmination of a season-long series of rodeo competitions across the US and Canada. During the season, competitors earn points, in each of 13 rodeo events, toward qualifying for Finals. WGRF brings the top 20 point-earning cowboys and cowgirls to compete in Las Vegas for the coveted title of “2015 WGRF Champions.”

Gay Rodeo events include calf and team roping, horse barrel racing, flag racing and pole bending, and the rough stock events bull riding, steer riding, bronc riding and chute dogging. In addition, there are three special “camp” events that are always crowd favorites. The camp events include steer decorating, goat dressing, and the amazing and fun wild drag race in which a team of three try to get a fully costumed “drag” queen mounted on the back of a bucking steer. If you have never seen the hilarious and unpredictable wild drag race ... now is your chance!

The two-day “best of the best” rodeo competition will be held all day Saturday



October 10, 2015 and Sunday, October 11, 2015 at the fabulous South Point Hotel, Casino and Spa. Fans can come and stay all day or come for just a few hours of great entertainment. Grand Entry starts at approximately 12 noon, with events happening in the morning and afternoon. In addition to the rodeo action, IGRA will hold the 2016 Royalty Competition where community outreach volunteers from the member associations compete for the titles of Miss, Mr, Ms, and MsTer IGRA Royalty Titles.

The 2015 World Gay Rodeo Finals marks the 29th WGRF competition. The first Gay Rodeo was held in Reno, NV in 1976. The International Gay Rodeo Association was formed in 1985 with the cooperation of associations in Colorado, Texas, California, Arizona and Oklahoma. From its founding, IGRA's mission has included collaboration with member associations in raising money for charities in their communities each year. To date, member associations have raised over \$2 million for a diverse array of charitable organizations.



WORLD GAY RODEO FINALS

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SUBSTANCE ABUSE AMONG THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY

[by Jessica Kantor, content developer with Solutions Recovery, Inc.]

There are many reasons experts say individuals initially partake in drug use, including experiencing bullying, oppression, fear and shyness. People often become hooked after trying drugs, and some continue using to self-medicate until their lives are torn apart and the only remaining options are treatment or death.

Although this doesn't apply to everyone who experiences addiction, these situations can be seen among members of the LGBTQ community. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration reports that around 9 percent of the United States population has a substance abuse problem. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, between 20 to 30 percent of the LGBTQ community struggles with a substance abuse problem.

Mike D., a gay Las Vegas resident, says he didn't start taking drugs because he was unhappy. In fact, it was the exact opposite.

"I got introduced to [drugs] in my early 20s in college. The feeling was great," he says, painting a carefree picture of overindulging in life's offerings. "I was promiscuous and I would use drugs and have sex."

The thrill didn't last, however. After awhile, he says, the drug use turned from pleasure to pain.

"I started to feel negative and depressed because

of the drugs," he says. "Instead of getting rid of them, I would use them as an escape."

Joshua Montgomery is the HIV prevention director at The Center in Las Vegas, an organization that provides support and social programs for the local LGBTQ community. He is in recovery himself and proud of it, he says. The majority of people he sees looking for help with addiction and substance abuse are the classically portrayed "oppressed persons," he says, usually trying drugs to self-medicate their pain.

Often they keep using and can't stop, he adds, leading to using more to cover the additional pain that stems from their addiction.

"I work closely with the community center to help them find out why they are using, what things in their life happened that causes them to self-medicate," Montgomery says. "They need to discover the courage to talk to people, instead of hiding their pain behind alcohol and drugs."

What's interesting about Mike's and Montgomery's experiences is that they give

opposite reasons for initial drug use. One says he used drugs because he was in a happy stage of his life, while the other says that people often use drugs because they are sad. Maybe this is why Nancy Reagan chose such a generic phrase, “Just Say No” to battle drug use in the 1980s. People try drugs for many different reasons.

Drug use can sometimes cause a significant impact to people’s lives. Solutions Recovery, a drug and alcohol addiction treatment center in Las Vegas, has heard a long list of items people can lose to addiction, including homes, jobs, kids and partners. They can also lose their personality and their morals.

Ask Mike D. what people should teach youths to help promote awareness and prevent drug use, and he acknowledges that many people face oppression across all walks of life. Growing up as a gay individual he faced oppression, but that didn’t mean his straight friend wasn’t getting bullied, too. Any sad or hurt kids need to be taught that drugs will only make the pain worse, he says, as it only masks the pain for a short period of time.

It is also important to highlight that drugs can still take hold when you’re happy, he says, because you think you aren’t capable of being addicted.

The lesson here is that a variety of individuals try drugs for many reasons, including the young, old, gay, straight, sad and happy. Instead of targeting one type of person about drug use, it is valuable to reach out to a wide variety of individuals.

That’s where the Solutions Recovery Foundation, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization in Las Vegas dedicated to educating local children about addiction, is hoping to make a difference. The nonprofit has created and distributed more than 50,000 informative booklets on the dangers associated with opiates, methamphetamine, bath salts and underage drinking to students at local schools. The nonprofit has also conducted presentations at numerous schools to discuss the

impact of addiction.

Greg Wherley, director of the nonprofit, says his main objective is to help stop kids from trying drugs and alcohol.

“We have a program here called SAPP that brings together kids who have gotten in trouble at school for substances and we teach them what drugs do to their body,” says Wherley.

He says that this isn’t enough, though, and it is also important to start talking to kids at their

schools before drugs even become a personal issue for them. He emphasizes the value of teaching children that it doesn’t matter why you might be trying drugs.

If you become addicted, then your life has pretty much been signed away after that first use.

Wherley also plans to help combat the higher percentage of substance abuse in the LGBTQ community. He has plans to work with The Center in the future to bring together LGBTQ youths in the community for classes, workshops and all around fun that can help deter them from trying drugs.

Addressing drug abuse is a top priority both for members of the LGBTQ community and additional Southern Nevada residents. Solutions Recovery and the Solutions Recovery Foundation are happy to answer questions about drug abuse and the keys to prevention.

Between 20 to 30 percent of the LGBTQ community struggles with a substance abuse problem.

**For more information
Visit www.solutions-recovery.com
Or call 702-323-0079**

COMMUNITY COUNSELING CENTER OF SOUTHERN NEVADA PROUDLY SERVES LGBT NEVADANS

[by Ronald W. Lawrence, MFT, Founder/Executive Director]

Many moons ago, I finished graduate school as a trained mental health professional. My plans were to engage in private practice and lead a fairly solitary life. However, as I bore witness to the overwhelming struggle for all LGBT persons to grow within ourselves, and develop a community as well, I knew that I needed to form some type of organization to assist with these endeavors. In a very homophobic community, we were trying to develop our subculture and fight for our rights, and at the same time the crisis presented by HIV/AIDS was out of control. An AIDS-phobic community often denied services to those in need. We had to develop our own support systems. Thus, Community Counseling Center was born on April 1, 1990.

In addition to CCC's place in the LGBT history of Las Vegas, we were also able to participate in community development. LGBT persons are blessed with imagination and a drive towards self-actualization. When a group of us comes together, ideas flow. In a small group therapy room at CCC, in the summer of 1993, we held the initial formation meeting for the LGBT Center. The primary reason was that youth needed a walk-in environment where they didn't need parental permission for intervention. With PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) at our side, we moved ahead. My beloved husband, Dan Hinkley, became the founding Board President and later, as the unpaid Executive Director, wrote the first successful grant to fund

the LGBT Center. In addition to this, he and his Board of Directors hosted Evan Wolfson of the Freedom to Marry Project. The words "Gay Marriage" were introduced for the first time as a serious concept throughout our organizations. Every time I visit the Center, I'm so proud of the part that I, and CCC, played in its development. To this day, CCC partners with the Center and we are able to offer free infectious disease testing at the Center in conjunction with the Southern Nevada Health District.

Steps in community development that seemed small at the time, appear monumental when I look back. In 1999, we began negotiations to purchase buildings for Community Counseling Center and

*CCC Staff celebrates
Spirit Day*



the Metropolitan Community Church. With the LGBT Center in an owned building close by, our Community became property owners. All of a sudden, we were “on the map” and governmental entities had to deal with LGBT individuals “up close and personal.” I didn’t realize how powerful that would be. We became “known” in the community at large and developed powerful partnerships with each other. Our growth in power was both internal in our own subculture and external to the wider community. We garnered respect! Community Counseling Center reveled at being a part of community building.

In conjunction with the development and history that we shared, those of us who were at the core of Community Counseling Center designed services for the LGBT community that are LGBT-affirmative in nature. By “affirmative” we refer to a safe place where our sexual/

affectional expressions and identities are not in any way questioned, but rather empowered. Our goal is to present services to our subculture that build strength and self-worth that live powerfully inward, but reflect outward as well.

Core services consist of substance abuse intervention and mental health recovery. In providing such services, we offer various modalities of care. Individual psychotherapy occurs in a private confidential atmosphere. Participants are free to explore their innermost thoughts with a trained psychotherapist. Clients gain insight and new ideas regarding how to pilot their own lives and grow as people. Group psychotherapy can be enlightening and powerful when the dilemmas of our own lives are reflected through the eyes of others. We become our own best teachers. For individuals whose mental health or addiction problems are more serious, we offer intensive outpatient programming where

persons can attend treatment groups for three hours per day, up to five days per week.

We accept the mandate to assist with addiction recovery in our subculture. In the early days of my own career, I witnessed the conjoined relationship of addiction and homophobia. One of my clients was shamed for his behavior as a gay man by a psychotherapist out in the community. Her demeaning remarks helped drive him into a three-week drinking binge prior his coming to our doorstep. When subjected to our gay-affirmative programming, he experienced recovery. Some of the substances that demand a recovery lifestyle are alcohol, cocaine, meth, and addiction to pain-killing opiates. I'm proud to say that LGBT clients are treated with the same care as that first young man, and ushered into recovery with compassion and understanding. We also help inspire recovery for behavioral addictions such as gambling, sexual addiction, and compulsive connections to pornography.

Mental health programming at Community Counseling Center reflects sensitivity in our usual gay-affirmative environment. Issues for which we offer assistance vary widely. By far, one of the most common manifestations in the LGBT community is major depression. Anxiety is another common issue. Our greatest expertise however, lies in the intricate process related to trauma recovery. Whether it is the victimization of sexual assault or extended time in the military, a viable plan for treatment is always forthcoming. Two wonderful MD psychiatrists offer prescribed medication as well as continued medication management appointments.

Our Community Health Program is a shining star that responsibly serves persons with HIV or hepatitis C infections. Counseling works to resolve outstanding issues in order to reduce stress for the best possible path to health. Creating a viable plan for working with the medical system is an integral part of wellness programming. Introductions to services at Community Counseling Center as well as those offered by other providers take place in our relaxed weekly "Living" room meetings.



Stress management and dietary information are continually available. Outreach personnel carry the message of wellness to the wider community.

Awareness of the trappings of our own health and power has often led to advocacy activities. We campaign against traumatic reparative therapy to make the gay person straight. We support and testify on behalf of legislation that will help assure LGBT equality. We train other professionals regarding supportive attitudes towards our subculture.

For an organization such as Community Counseling Center to be truly effective, there must be a meaningful treatment philosophy. Our belief is that every person somehow carries their own internal tools to resolve problems. Our job is to connect or amplify those tools and connect them to current situations. The world-renowned psychiatrist, Milton Erickson referred to such a therapeutic schema as "Utilization."

Charitable giving in our direction can be of great assistance. In spite of the Affordable Care Act, we still have clients who desperately need services, but are uninsured. Under managed care, time in treatment is often limited. Charitable contributions would enable us to keep individuals in treatment when insurance lapses in order to provide an effective depth of care. Our goal is to assist at providing impeccable physical and emotional health to the LGBT community as a ticket to strength and empowerment. Assistance in that endeavor is always appreciated.

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A transgender woman seeking to avoid her country's intransigent persecution, a young professional man recently married to his American-born husband, a distressed widower worried about her legal status, and an eight-year-old child who endured weeks of harrowing travel to flee from violence have all come to the Immigrant Justice Initiative ("IJI") in search of help.

In many ways, these four people could not be more different. They are from different countries and lead vastly different lives. They speak different languages, wear different clothes, and enjoy different foods. But no matter how they differ, they have something in common: they all face the impossibly complicated and byzantine American immigration system.

Alone, they don't stand much of a chance. The American immigration system is absolutely

merciless to people who cannot afford attorneys. For example, if you apply for asylum without legal representation, you only have a 16% chance of success. But those with lawyers have a 46% of success. Luckily, they met Arlene Rivera, Executive Director of IJI.

IJI is a 501(c)3 organization that provides free and low-cost legal representation to immigrants and their families. "Many of our clients have spent years unaware of their options," said Ms. Rivera. "They may have had an idea that there was something available for them, but were intimidated by the process because they heard horror stories about document preparers perpetrating wide-spread fraud and unscrupulous attorneys that made them feel no more comfortable. Their families needed someone they could trust and who they could afford and unfortunately the existing local charitable organizations were already at their limits in terms of the scope and quantity of cases that they could accept. We had to do something."

Most attorneys charge thousands of dollars for asylum applications, which is out of the question for many recent immigrants. To meet this need, IJI offers the same service at a significantly reduced rate for families that can afford it. If a family cannot afford the reduced price, IJI will provide the services for free. "We don't think that a person's financial situation should have any bearing on their ability to enforce their rights," said Ms. Rivera. "We do what we can to offer services for as little as possible," said Ms. Rivera. "We never turn anyone in need away because they cannot pay, but we ask those with some financial means to pay what they can."

Currently, IJI is funded by individual donations and does not receive any grant funding. "We're

For example, if you apply for asylum without legal representation, you only have a 16% chance of success. But those with lawyers have a 46% of success.

working to help as many people and families as possible, and we hope that grant makers will notice the good work we're doing and provide support in the future," said Ms. Rivera. "In the meantime, we're supported by donations and the low fees we charge."

IJI currently has 60 clients, including clients with asylum claims, special immigrant juvenile petitions; family petitions; petitions for victims of violence and human trafficking, and DACA. "I would love to take more clients, but IJI is a very lean operation. We take on as many clients as we can and we refer the balance to a network of attorneys who have agreed to take on clients on a pro bono basis."

In addition to the work done locally, IJI has volunteered in detention centers in Texas and New Mexico to provide guidance on asylum claims to women and children detained in the highly controversial family residential centers some are now calling internment camps.

IJI is a 501(c)(3), tax-exempt public charity. IJI accepts donations through its website: www.ijinevada.org. Arlene Rivera can be reached at arlene@ijinevada.org.



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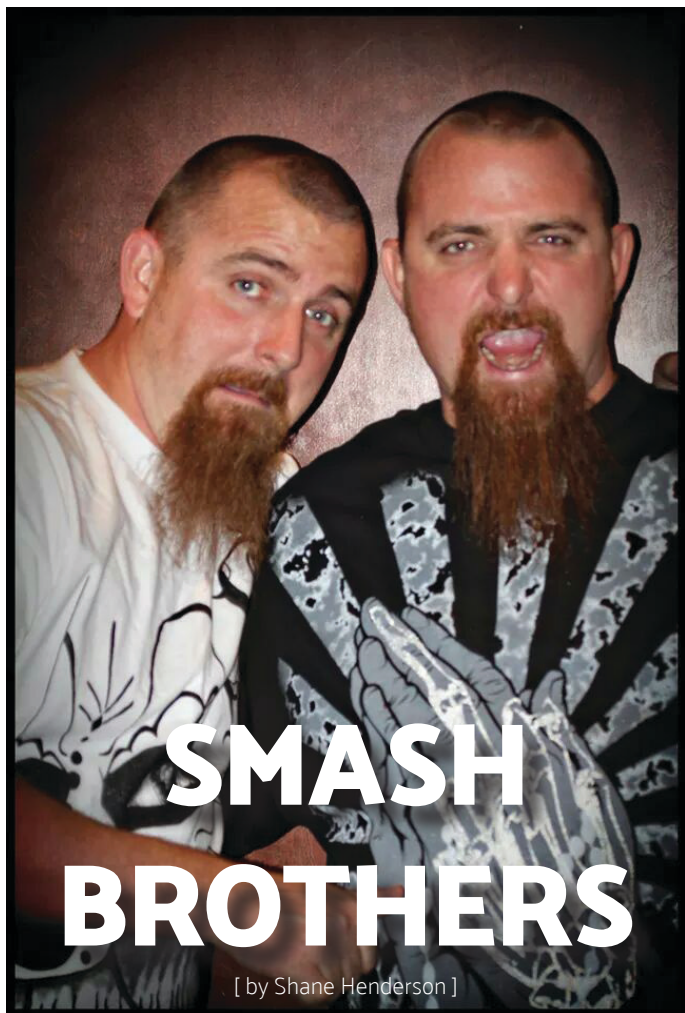


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How did you gain the name, “Smash Brothers?”

Years ago a guy said you guys should be the smash brothers. You guys smash it every time I see you. From then on the name just kind of stuck.

What advice would you give anyone interested in doing standup?

Don't get into this business to get rich and famous. It takes years to make money and not every funny comic makes it big. Do this because you love to make people laugh.

What makes your act unique?

We are identical twins. That's the main thing that makes us different. There are a few other twin acts but they are nothing like us. We are the 2 live crew of comedy.

How would you describe your set to someone who has never seen you perform?

Our set is never planned or rehearsed. We have an idea of what will be said but we never plan

100% what we will say. We talk about things such as race, growing up as twins, and sex and every day life. There isn't a comedy duo out there like us.

Is there a standup performance that stands out as a favorite?

One of our best performances would have to be on Andrew Dice Clays the blue show on the showtime nextwork. We have been turned down for years and Dice said we could be as dirty as we want. We went last after all these great comics crushed it and Dice said just go out there be the smash brothers. It was one of our best sets of our lives. We owe a lot to the dice man for believing in us.

Favorite comedian in the industry currently?

Ralphie May is our favorite comedian. This guy is not only our best friend but we lol to him like a brother. He is one of the greatest to ever step on the stage and he has taught us so much

Most challenging thing about doing standup?

The most challenging thing being a duo is everything cost us twice as much. Planes, trains etc. And we only make half of what any other headliner makes. But that's ok with us. We over this business with all of our hearts. Making people laugh is the greatest job in the world and we wouldn't give this up for anything.

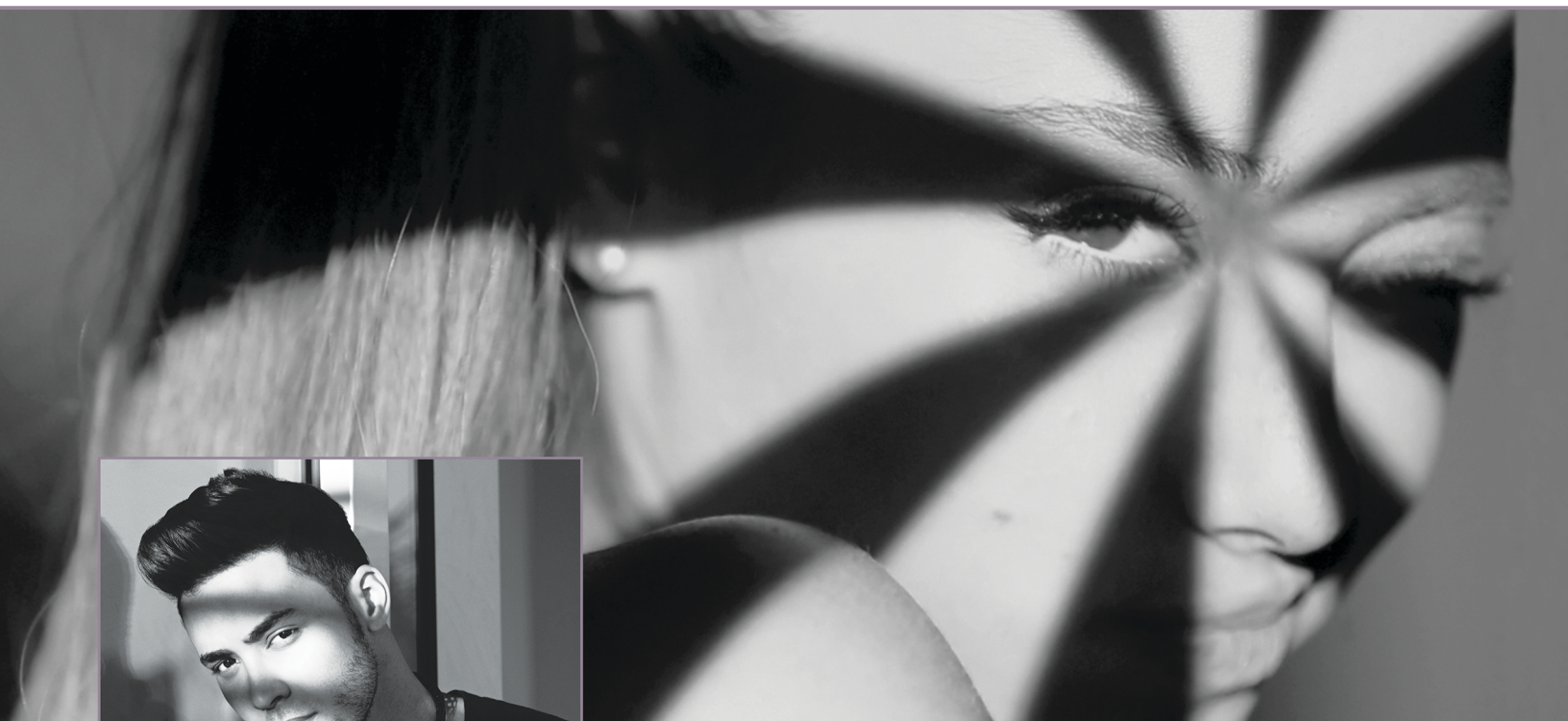
Where can fans catch your shows?

You can catch us on tour with Ralphie May or every month on the 3rd Wednesday of every month we are at the Ontario Improv for the Dirty show. We have been running that show for 9 years and it's the greatest comedy show in the country. Come check us out or follow us on social media @ corynchad.



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