



# News Release

County Commission:  
Steve Sisolak, Chairman  
Chris Giunchigliani, Vice Chair  
Susan Brager  
Larry Brown  
James B. Gibson  
Marilyn Kirkpatrick  
Lawrence Weekly

Yolanda King, County Manager

Office of Public Communications • (702) 455-3546 • FAX (702) 455-3558 • [www.ClarkCountyNV.gov](http://www.ClarkCountyNV.gov)

Contact: Stacey Welling  
Sr. Public Information Officer

Phone: (702) 455-3201  
Cell: (702) 249-3823  
E-mail: [stac@ClarkCountyNV.gov](mailto:stac@ClarkCountyNV.gov)

For Immediate Release

Monday, Sept. 17, 2018

## Clark County, Vegas Strong Resiliency Center Unveil Las Vegas Portraits Project, 1 October Memorial Exhibit Crosses, `Art of Healing' Mural, `Angels of Love' Also Displayed

In conjunction with the one-year anniversary of the 1 October shooting, Clark County and the Vegas Strong Resiliency Center unveiled an exhibit of portraits of the 58 victims who lost their lives in the attack. The portraits were painted by artists from across the United States and around the world.

The Las Vegas Portraits Project, 1 October Memorial Exhibit is located in the Rotunda Gallery on the first floor of the Clark County Government Center, 500 S. Grand Central Parkway in downtown Las Vegas. It will be on display **through Oct. 19**. Crosses that were put up at the Welcome to Las Vegas sign to memorialize those who died also are on display. The "Art of Healing Mural" created by Las Vegas Academy of the Arts students and the local Guerilla Artz Foundation is on exhibit in addition to a display of stained-glass angels made by volunteers of the nonprofit Angels of Love organization based in Orange, Calif.

"Our community will never forget the lives lost in the 1 October shooting or those who were injured or have been affected by the tragedy," said Clark County Commission Chairman Steve Sisolak. "We continue to be touched by the outpouring of compassion and support we have received from people around the world and we hope this exhibit is a source of comfort to those who lost loved ones and support for all those affected."

Clark County commissioners presented artist Ellen Abramo of Nazareth, Pa., with a proclamation honoring her and her cousin Kortney Struempf of Marietta, Ga., for organizing the Las Vegas Portraits Project to pay tribute to those who lost their lives in the shooting. Additionally Mary Jo von Tillow, wife of Kurt von Tillow, who lost his life at the Route 91 festival shooting, participated in today's opening day ceremony at the Clark County Government Center. Mary Jo and Kurt of Cameron Park, Calif., met four other family members in Las Vegas last year to attend the festival. Kurt and Mary Jo's niece and sister in law from Northern California were shot.

"My family has struggled since that night and our recovery is ongoing," Mary Jo von Tillow said. "A big part of our healing and moving forward has been the outreach from so many people around the world including the Las Vegas Portraits Project, which was very touching to all of us."

In the immediate days after 1 October, artists Abramo and Struempf organized the Las Vegas Portraits Project on Facebook using the handle @lasvegasmemorial seeking volunteer artists willing to illustrate a portrait of each person who died. Abramo's mother, Virginia Culbertson of Edgefield, S.C., painted the portrait of Kurt in collaboration with Mary Jo. The portrait was based on a photograph of Kurt from their daughter's wedding and includes a prominent American flag in honor of von Tillow's patriotism. "My husband was the

Clark County news releases may be found at [www.ClarkCountyNV.gov](http://www.ClarkCountyNV.gov).

You may also follow the County on more than 40 social media sites, including **Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, YouTube and NextDoor.**

## News Release

most patriotic person I have ever know,” Mary Jo said “We called him ‘Captain America’ and although he never served in the military he was proud of all who did. He always flew a flag in our yard and always stood for the national anthem with pride and hand over his heart.”

“We have had some very special experiences come about through this project as some families were able to collaborate with artists on the portrait of their loved ones,” Abramo said. “There is nothing more humbling than to get a message from a victim’s family member or close friend and read that they love the portrait or that their loved one’s personality or smile was captured. From the bottom of our hearts, we hope this exhibit will be well received by the public, not for the artistic ability expressed but for the love that was poured into it.”

The Vegas Strong Resiliency Center and the county’s Parks & Recreation Department Public Art Office partnered with project organizers to curate the exhibit. The portraits range in size. They are hung on a wall, maximizing the use of natural light from the Government Center’s outdoor amphitheater. The County Museum crosses are set up nearby on tiered pedestals.

“We are proud to host this exhibit in honor of those who lost their lives in the tragedy and as a gift of healing to share with their families and our community for the first anniversary,” said Clark County Commissioner Jim Gibson, whose district includes the festival site where the 1 October incident occurred. “This exhibit serves as a tribute to the 58 beautiful lives lost in the incident, and hopefully will inspire all of us to continue to love and support each other as we cope and work to make this community stronger.

Each artist selected for the Las Vegas project chose his or her subject from images and biographical information that appeared in published news stories about the victims following the 1 October attack. Some of the participating artists live outside the United States in Canada and as far away as Greece and Peru. “Our goal with this project is to help build a bridge of hope and healing through art, and we appreciate Clark County’s and the Vegas Strong Resiliency Center’s partnership in this effort,” Struempf said.

The Las Vegas Portraits Project exhibit also serves as an effort to encourage anyone affected by 1 October to reach out to the Vegas Strong Resiliency Center to learn about its services. Throughout the exhibit period, the resiliency center plans to staff a resource table in the Rotunda with trained volunteers and therapists from the American Red Cross to help those who may need emotional support. Additionally, volunteers from nonprofit, Las Vegas-based Michael’s Angel Paws also will be on hand with therapy dogs at times during the exhibit to provide emotional support through the benefit of interaction with a gentle, friendly pet. AV Vegas, which was working the stages of Route 91 at the time of the event, donated the staging for the display of the crosses. Shepard Exposition Services of Las Vegas donated the walls for displaying the portraits.

“This exhibit is a tremendous example of the love and support we have received from afar and from within our own community,” said Clark County Commission Vice Chair Chris Giunchigliani. “From the Nevada State Museum, which helped store the portraits, to local students who painted the healing mural and companies that donated materials for the displays, many talented people have worked to make this exhibit the tribute and testament of hope and goodness that it is intended to be.”

Officials are reminding anyone who was present the night of the shooting to sign up for the Nevada Victims of Crime Program by Oct. 1, 2018. The program will help pay for expenses not covered by insurance such as counseling co-pays. An application for the program is available on the Vegas Strong Resiliency Center’s website at [www.VegasStrongRC.org](http://www.VegasStrongRC.org). Callers also can reach the center by phone at (702) 455-AIDE (2433) locally or toll-free at 1-833-299-AIDE (2433) or by email at [vegasstrongresiliencycenter@clarkcountynv.gov](mailto:vegasstrongresiliencycenter@clarkcountynv.gov). The center is located at 1524 Pinto Lane in Las Vegas and is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, excluding weekends and holidays.

###

Clark County is a dynamic and innovative organization dedicated to providing top-quality service with integrity, respect and accountability. With jurisdiction over the world-famous Las Vegas Strip and covering an area the size of New Jersey, Clark is the nation’s 14<sup>th</sup>-largest county and provides extensive regional services to more than 2.25 million citizens and 45.5 million visitors a year. Included are the nation’s 8<sup>th</sup>-busiest airport, air quality compliance, social services and the state’s largest public hospital, University Medical Center. The County also provides municipal services that are traditionally provided by cities to 1 million residents in the unincorporated area. Those include fire protection, roads and other public works, parks and recreation, and planning and development.

Clark County news releases may be found at [www.ClarkCountyNV.gov](http://www.ClarkCountyNV.gov).  
You may also follow the County on more than 40 social media sites, including  
**Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, and NextDoor.**