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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

21st Annual International AIDS Candlelight Memorial Vigil

(Las Vegas, Nev., - May 14, 2004) - On Sunday, May 16, 2004, thousands of individuals in more than 3000 communities in 85 countries will participate in the world's largest grassroots HIV/AIDS event -- the International AIDS Candlelight Memorial Vigil. This year's theme, "turning remembrance into action," was created to encourage communities to incorporate advocacy activities that extend beyond the official candlelight event.

In Las Vegas, the candlelight memorial will be held in the courtyard of the Christ Church Episcopal at 2000 S. Maryland Parkway, from 6:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. The local observance will honor the memory of those lost to AIDS, support people living with HIV/AIDS, raise community awareness and involvement, and decrease stigma related to HIV/AIDS. Additionally, the event will include a candlelight reading of over 350 names of Nevadans who have lost their lives in the fight against AIDS.

"The International AIDS Candlelight Memorial Vigil serves as an opportunity to publicly mourn loved ones lost to AIDS, and strengthen local and national commitments to HIV/AIDS education and stopping the spread of the disease," said Rick Reich, Communicable Disease, AIDS Services Supervisor for the health district.

"More than 2,800 county residents are living with HIV," said Dr. Donald Kwalick, chief health officer for the health district. Additionally, there have been more than 4,200 diagnosed AIDS cases in Clark County, and more than 2,200 of those people have died," said Kwalick.

The original memorial was held in 1983, when the cause of AIDS was unknown and no more than a few thousand AIDS deaths had been recorded. Today, more than 22 million people have died of AIDS, and some 34 million people worldwide currently live with HIV and AIDS.

To find out more about the local memorial vigil, contact Cherie-Filler Maietta at (702) 759-0726 or Antioco Carrillo at (702) 806-4591 with the health district office of AIDS.

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