

# En La Vida



A MONTHLY LGBTQ+ NEWSLETTER FROM WINDY CITY TIMES

## Hello lovely readers,

Welcome back to *En La Vida*.

I hope you all found something restorative and calming in this last month—even if only for a little bit. We're in a tumultuous time, but can't face it if we don't take time to get our bearings.

It's been a strange time as a queer journalist because I often find myself calling folks for interviews and learning about the wonderful things they're doing—only to find out within days their programs are losing federal grant funding.

Trans Chicago at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center is one such case. The organization's future remains uncertain as it awaits clarity on whether it will continue receiving federal funding. But their work continues, and I'm inspired by their dedication to supporting their community. You can read more in my story below.

I also found hope in some recent conversations with my sources, whether it be the drag performers involved in the important PrEPárate campaign or trans elder Lisa Isadora Cruz.

When I spoke to Cruz for her feature, I was often struck by how calmly and confidently she appeared to look towards the future. She believed so firmly in our community and our ability to better ourselves and keep pushing forward.

Hearing that from someone who has had such a full life—often laced with profound difficulties—was quite moving. I hope you enjoy reading her story as much as I enjoyed writing about it.

Everyone agrees this is a scary and difficult time. But everyone is meeting the moment by doing what they can do within their niche to help people and inspire confidence.

I hope this month's stories inspire you in some way, whether it be through a call to action, a boost of confidence or just the knowledge you are not alone.



**Lu Calzada**

En La Vida Newsletter Coordinator

## Support our LGBTQ+ journalism!

For four decades, Windy City Times has been a vital voice for Chicago's LGBTQ+ community. But it is our readers who make this work possible.

Please consider making a one-time, monthly or yearly contribution today to ensure this important work continues for years to come.

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**Our top stories** 



## **Lisa Isadora Cruz reflects on decades of giving back to Chicago's trans community**

**By Lu Calzada**

Lisa Isadora Cruz began her journey as a performer in 1970s New York City, just after the Stonewall Riots. Performing under the name Ginger Valdez, she found community in the ballroom scene and the House of Xtravaganza, with early support from her father.

After moving to Chicago in 1991, Cruz faced personal struggles, including drug use and incarceration. Her turning point came when she joined the Minority Outreach Intervention Project as its first trans woman outreach worker, launching her public health career.

Over the years, Cruz has served as an HIV counselor, case manager, and care coordinator, focusing on trans women of color living with HIV. Her work with the CDC's TWIST project and other agencies helped reshape services for the trans community.

Now in her late 60s, Cruz continues to mentor others and advocate for trans youth. The Trans Chicago Empowerment Center was named in her honor,

celebrating her decades of service to Chicago's trans community.

[Read more](#)

## **‘Representation Matters’: Anthony Quezada takes seat as 35th Ward alderman**



Anthony Quezada was sworn in today as alderman of Chicago's 35th Ward during a special City Council meeting, filling the vacancy left by former Ald. Carlos Ramirez-Rosa.


Quezada, who has represented the area as a Cook County commissioner since 2022, is now one of nine members of the City Council's LGBTQ+ Caucus. A Logan Square native and the son of working-class immigrants from Mexico and Costa Rica, Quezada has deep roots in the ward and a long history of community organizing.

Surrounded by friends, family and supporters—including Ramirez-Rosa—Quezada pledged to be an alderman who “listens, organizes and governs

alongside” his constituents.

City Council voted 32-11 to confirm his appointment.

[Read more](#)

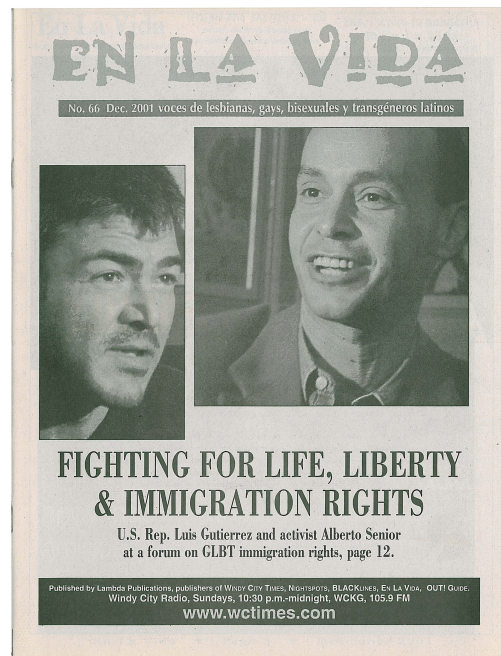
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## Out the Archives

### LGBTQ+ immigration issues in the early 2000s

#### December 2001

In 2001, LGBTQ+ rights and immigration were major issues in U.S. politics, much like today. Early efforts like the Permanent Partners Immigration Act aimed to address discrimination against same-sex couples but didn't succeed until later Supreme Court rulings.



**Writing: Tracy Baim**

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## More En La Vida stories



**PreEPárate campaign aims to provide PrEP information to queer Latines**

[Read more](#)



**Trans Chicago Empowerment Center still in the dark about federal funding**

[Read more](#)



**Evette Cardona reflects on her years of activism, philanthropy, upcoming award**

[Read more](#)



**Chicago advocates, lawmakers fight against Trump's plan to cut CDC's HIV prevention funding**

[Read more](#)



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**Latina Poetry Initiative and DePaul hold concert centering lesbian experiences**

[Read more](#)



**DePaul Latino fraternity hosts drag night to stand against machismo**

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**La Decima Musa event pays tribute to feminist icon**

[Read more](#)

**Call for submissions!** 

# WCT seeks nominees for annual 30 Under 30 awards

Windy City Times is seeking nominations for its 30 Under 30 awards, which celebrate outstanding LGBTQ+ individuals and allies. Nominations are due by April 11, and the awards ceremony will be held in early June.

[🔗: Read more.](#)

## Other LGBTQ+ news



## Thousands gather in downtown Chicago to tell Trump and Musk 'hands off'

An estimated 30,000 Chicagoans gathered at Daley Plaza on April 5 for the "Hands Off!" protest, opposing policies from President Donald Trump and advisor Elon Musk that threaten social programs and civil liberties

[🔗: Read more](#)

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## Lifelong LGBTQ+ activist faces eviction and possible homelessness at 75

Lifelong LGBTQ+ activist Don Bell, 75, faces eviction from Chicago's only LGBTQ+ senior housing facility, raising urgent concerns about elder housing insecurity.

: [Read more](#)

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## 'We're not going anywhere': Chicago rally draws thousands to defend trans rights


Thousands gathered in Chicago for the "Rally for Trans Visibility," organized by Trans Up Front Illinois, to oppose increasing anti-trans policies and celebrate the transgender community.


: [Read more](#)

## For the Social Butterflies

### PrEPárate Gallery Exhibition

: April 11 from 6-10 p.m.

: Chicago Art Department, 1926 S. Halsted St.

: Free

[Tickets](#)



## More Latinx LGBTQ+ Events

April 11: [SMOOCH at Jackhammer](#)

April 11: [Art Gallery Opening: Pia Cruzalegui and Tom Berry](#)

April 13: [21 - a Curated Day Party for the Culture](#)

April 24-26: [Black and Brown Poetry Festival](#)

April 25: ["Resisting Erasure" art gallery opening, presented by the LGBTQ+ Intergenerational Dialogue Project](#)

July 5: [2025 Esteem Awards](#)

Windy City Times adds new events every week to the Chicago Social Butterflies calendar. To submit your event, go to our [submission page](#).



**Subscribe to Chicago Social Butterflies  
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**Thanks for reading *En La Vida*!**

Do you have a story idea we should pursue?

Hit reply and let us know!

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Windy City Times

Chicago Social Butterflies/News on Q/BLACKlines/En La Vida

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