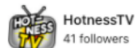




Seizing Opportunities in the Cannabis Industry Moderator and Panelists at ELLA Conference - May 5th, 2024 at Chart House, Weehawken, NJ

Empowering Women and Exploring New Frontiers: The ELLA Conference Experience



March 7, 2024

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This March, as the spring air began to thaw the winter chill, the Hudson County Latin American Chamber of Commerce (HCLACC) hosted an event that was as invigorating as the season's change. The "ELLA" Eres Latina Admirable Conference, held in celebration of International Women's Day and Women's History Month, unfolded against the scenic backdrop of the Chart House in Weehawken, New Jersey. It was not just an event but a declaration of resilience, empowerment, and forward-thinking, especially within the realms of mental health and the burgeoning cannabis industry.

The conference was divided into two groundbreaking panels, meticulously curated to address the dual themes of the day. The first panel, moderated by Deborah Visconi, President & CEO at Bergen New Bridge Medical Center (BNBMC), featuring Lorelle Holway, Vice President of Education at Care Plus NJ, Dr. Monica Dhingra, Director of the Psychiatry Residency Program at BNBMC, and Kevin Miller, CEO at Revive Behavioral Health Management (Revive BHM), tackled **"Women's Resilience and the Challenges of Mental Health."** This profound exploration delved into the strength inherent in women, the unique challenges they face, and the paths to healing and empowerment.

The second panel marked a pioneering foray into **"Seizing Opportunities in the Cannabis Industry,"** a topic of immense relevance following the legalization of cannabis in New Jersey in 2021. Spearheaded by Margarita Duran, Director of Cannabis Business at HCLACC and CEO of New Jersey Cannabis Club, this discussion brought together influential voices like Caroline Colone, Director of Specialty Services - Cannabis Division at Valley Bank, Sam Delgado, Vice Chair at New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission (NJ-CRC), and Rosemarie Moyeno Matos, CEO at Law Office of Rosemarie Moyeno Matos LLC. The panelists delved into the legal, entrepreneurial, and social implications of cannabis in New Jersey, emphasizing the importance of education on cannabis use, legal compliance in the workplace, and the broader impact of cannabis legalization on businesses and communities.

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ELLA Conference at Chart House - Weehawken, NJ - March 5th, 2024

What set the ELLA Conference apart was its focus on Latin empowerment and the creation of a platform for networking, learning, and growth. It was an unforgettable day, full of stories of resilience, success, and a collective striving towards betterment. Margarita Duran's leadership in delivering the message on cannabis emphasized that this industry is not a fleeting trend but a significant part of New Jersey's future landscape. Her call to action was clear: "educate yourself, understand the legal frameworks, and embrace the opportunities that cannabis legalization presents."

Under the visionary leadership of President Heidi Castrillon, the Hudson County Latin American Chamber of Commerce has proven itself a beacon of innovation and advocacy. By spotlighting mental health and the cannabis industry, the HCLACC has taken significant steps towards demystifying these critical issues and fostering an environment of knowledge, empowerment, and progress.

As we reflect on the ELLA Conference, it's evident that the conversations initiated here are just the beginning. The journey ahead is long, but with events like ELLA, we're reminded of the power of community, the strength of women, and the untapped potential within us all to drive change, foster innovation, and create a more inclusive and equitable world.

Heidi Castrillon, President of the Hudson County Latin American Chamber of Commerce, has set a new standard for engaging dialogue and actionable insights. It's a testament to the fact that when we come together to share our experiences, challenges, and visions for the future, there's no limit to what we can achieve.

Here's to more conversations, more empowerment, and a future where every woman sees herself as 'Eres Lider Latina Admirable'.

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