



# Emerald

CANNABIS LIFESTYLE

**How the  
NY CAURD  
Coalition is  
promoting  
social equity**



***The Social Equity Issue***

# The Emerald™ Magazine 2023 / The Social Equity Issue

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THE EMERALD™ MAGAZINE The Social Equity Issue • Photography by ERIC WILEY

## → Dear Reader:



Thank you for picking up your copy of *The Emerald™ Magazine*. As the cannabis industry continues to grow and evolve, it is crucial that we prioritize building social equity and equality within our community.

Historically, the criminalization of cannabis has disproportionately impacted marginalized communities, and it is our responsibility to actively work towards rectifying this injustice.

This quarter, we bring you **The Social Equity Issue**, where we've focused on the stories of individuals and organizations who are making a difference by creating opportunities for marginalized communities.

Our first feature article showcases the **Oakland Equity Collective**, an organization that supports new and existing cannabis businesses in launching and building successful brands with a focus on social equity operators in the City of Oakland.

We highlight how the Collective provides technical support, manufacturing, and co-packaging to both general and social equity operators to ensure compliance, support profitability, and empower successful cannabis business ownership.

In our second feature article, we've profiled **Sunday Drive**, an inclusive woman-owned and woman-operated dispensary in Vermont. With a demographic makeup of around 70% - 80% male business-owners in the cannabis industry,

Sunday Drive is a welcome outlier. Come along as we highlight the importance of diversity and inclusion by celebrating the entrepreneurship and innovation of women in cannabis.

Our third feature article, and cover story, focuses on the **New York CAURD coalition**—a group that supports applicants seeking to enter the regulated, retail New York cannabis market.

With a projected value of over \$4 billion by 2027, this market is highly anticipated. Follow us as we explore the challenges faced by CAURD applicants, and how the coalition is providing a platform for them to communicate and share resources.

Our last but certainly not least article discusses the crucial role that the **LGBTQIA+ community** has played in the fight for cannabis. Join us as we explore the history of how activists and allies fought for access to the plant, particularly in the context of the AIDS crisis.

We recognize the contributions of trailblazers like Brownie Mary and Dennis Peron who championed Proposition 215, California's law permitting the use of medical marijuana.

We hope that this issue can contribute to the conversation on furthering equality in the cannabis industry. We believe that by highlighting the stories of individuals and organizations who are making a difference, we can inspire more action towards a more inclusive and just industry.

Sincerely,  
Christina de Giovanni  
Publisher

SUBSCRIPTION  
\$40/Year

# The Social Equity Issue

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# Emerge & Evolve with the Oakland Equity Collective

By Andrea Unsworth ●

It has been a rough ride for social equity in the cannabis industry. While we do hear of some success stories, these are often overshadowed by the frustration of participants and operators who have lost cash, time, and hope. Too often there has been no easy way to push forward.

**D**ESPITE THIS, THE MERE EXISTENCE of “Social Equity” as a widely-recognized concept is the result of a true grassroots movement throughout the country over the course of a decade. Social equity has its roots in California, born out of years of late-night City Council meetings, and then developing into repeated stops and starts of various programs throughout the state. However, many would agree its true home is in the Bay Area – and more specifically, the City of Oakland.

Prior to Proposition 64, or the legalization of recreational cannabis, as we know it today - California was home to a strong medical marijuana program that eventually grew alongside a state-wide illicit, unregulated cannabis market that both wholesale and retail businesses.

Once Prop 64 went into effect, it became apparent that the “Green Rush” would effectively exclude Brown and Black entrepreneurs, thus doing further damage to those communities impacted by the War on Drugs.

## THE BIRTH OF SOCIAL EQUITY PROGRAMS

In the spring of 2017, the Oakland City Council enacted landmark cannabis legislation to promote equitable ownership and employment opportunities in the cannabis industry.

This in hope would decrease disparities in life outcomes for marginalized communities of color, and address the disproportionate impacts of the War on Drugs in those communities.

The City of Oakland’s strategies to date have included prioritized permitting for equity applicants, exemption from application and permit fees, technical assistance, and financial assistance via the Equity Loan and Grant Programs.

Specifically, the City of Oakland’s equity program worked as a partner-match system of incubators and equity applicants. The general applicant (incubator) had to provide an equity applicant with three years of free rent and provide access to a minimum of 1,000 square feet to conduct business operations, and any required security measures. This space could be located either at the general applicant’s place of business, or in other zoned locations approved for cannabis activity.

The second component was the equity loan and grant program which issued both grants and interest-free loans to social equity applicants on a tiered system. Each applicant is able to apply for funds based on the completion of various business items. Over time, Oakland allocated funds for specialty grants such as the “Education Grant.” They issued funds for completing coursework through a partnering educational program, as well as the “Emergency Grant,” to help equity businesses recover from theft, a burglary, or another emergency that was not the fault of the business. The City also provided funding for free technical and legal assistance, as well as a marketing budget to increase awareness of equity products available to retailers.

In 2020, COVID closures severely impacted many families and businesses throughout the world. Fortunately, California’s Governor Newsom deemed cannabis retailers (and indirectly manufacturers, cultivators, distributors, and testing labs) as “essential,” whereby many customers were at home in quarantine purchasing cannabis from deliveries and storefronts.

For many operators, this unexpected crisis resulted in a boom in revenues which allowed many to expand or at least maintain business operations and keep workers employed.

Commercial properties located in the cannabis-friendly “Green Zones” have always been challenging to find, and many property owners charge a significantly higher lease rate for cannabis businesses.

Many of the incubated equity businesses that signed three-year leases in 2018-

2019 found themselves without renewal opportunities in 2021, and were left with limited options to find a new space.

Often, much of the lease term was spent in the licensing process and build-out, which left little time for actual operations or generating revenue.

The last few years have also seen a steep rise in break-ins for cannabis businesses located in Oakland and other cities. Unfortunately, some businesses have also lost access to their facility as some property owners have decided not to renew leases or continue leasing to cannabis businesses entirely due to the property damage risk. The City of Oakland did provide resources on how to secure a building and help prevent a burglary, as well as emergency grant funding for those equity operators that had their facilities burglarized.

## THE EMERGENCE OF THE OAKLAND EQUITY COLLECTIVE

There are proven efficiencies that come from having multiple businesses located in the same facility; resources can be pooled to provide increased security and there is a supply chain created in one location by the various business types. As such, the City allocated funds for just such a property purchase and requested proposals from equity operators.

In 2021, the City of Oakland awarded a grant to equity operators who formed the Oakland Equity Collective (OEC). Oakland provided OEC with grant funds to purchase a property to advance manufacturing and distribution opportunities for the OEC team and a rotation of six additional equity manufacturers in OEC’s Shared-Use Facility.

The Oakland Equity Collective works to support new and existing cannabis businesses in launching and building successful brands, with a specific focus on social equity operators in the City of Oakland. The Collective offers technical support, manufacturing, and co-packaging to both general and social equity operators to ensure compliance, support profitability, and empower successful cannabis business ownership.

The OEC Shared-Use Facility provides equity applicants with a rent-free, compliant location to manufacture products and support distributing products to retailers. The OEC Shared-Use Facility will be made available to six new, or existing, equity manufacturers. OEC has recently selected two experienced applicants, two somewhat experienced applicants, and two relatively inexperienced applicants.

OEC’s white labeling service is a key component of OEC’s principal mission to enable its clients, cohort program, and workforce development staff. The objective is to make hand-crafted local products affordable. White labeling and co-packing are opportunities for companies looking to establish or expand a cannabis brand, without having to apply for a state license or own and operate a cannabis facility. The production team specializes in manufacturing a diverse range of products, which provides their clients with options for developing branded product concepts and targeting specific clientele.

The director of OEC, Adolph Ward, is one of the pioneers of Oakland’s legal cannabis industry and a leader in his community. He has successfully operated within Oakland’s equity program since its inception in 2017. Adolph’s professional expertise spans property management, sales, supply chain management, print media, and generating consumer demand. His current projects involve several commercial cannabis retail operations, including Zipp Delivery.

Alongside Adolph, three other owners were selected to help manage and operate the facility - Assata Bilal, Ron Tea, and Taalib Muhammad. Assata is currently co-founder of Illumina Co, which focuses on creating cannabis-infused products for the kitchen. She has over two decades of experience in the cannabis industry, with operations ranging from cultivation to manufacturing and distribution. In the Southeast, she served as co-owner of 4 Tha Soul catering and craft service, which also offered infused edibles.

Ron Tea was born and raised in San Francisco’s Chinatown in the late ‘60s and ‘70s, and was involved with gang life and violence very early in life. From these experiences, Ron developed a passion for mentoring at-risk youth and gives back by helping young people find direction and accomplish their goals. Town Biz will dedicate a portion of their profits to a mentoring program in Oakland that supports diversity among entrepreneurs. He graduated from Balboa High School, after which he joined an industrial avant-garde hip-hop group, The Beat-Nigs. After these adventures, Ron came home to Oakland and opened several businesses to build the life that he wanted.

Taalib A. B. Muhammad was born and raised in the Bay Area and is a graduate of Castlemont High School, Laney College, and Golden Gate University. After earning his Certificate in Hotel and Restaurant Management, he began his career as a manager within Nordstrom’s Cafes. He began making wines 12 years ago and first started experimenting with THC infusions in 2017. Sourcing his grapes from Solano County, his non-alcoholic, cannabis-infused wines have been successfully quality-tested by the Steep Hills Cannabis Laboratory. Taalib’s goal is to bring his non-alcoholic wine varietals to every dispensary in the nation.

In 2021, OEC brought in additional members to help manage the facility, bringing their own professional business and cannabis experience to the team. The first additional member is Mahlate Hagos, the Co-Founder of Doing It Ourselves (DIOS), a 100% black-owned Type-11 cannabis distribution company based in Oakland, CA. Mahlate grew up in West Oakland, a neighborhood that was overpoliced and suffered greatly during the War on Drugs. She witnessed first-hand the negative impacts that arose when her teen classmates were caught selling cannabis. The passage of Proposition 64 and Oakland’s equity permit program created a perfect opportunity for Mahlate to become an entrepreneur, give back to her community, and truly celebrate the strong cannabis culture in the Bay Area. A proud first-generation Ethiopian, Mahlate graduated with a master’s from Golden Gate University and trained professionally as a project manager.

Most recently the OEC team brought in Tulip & Oak Consulting, a Bay Area-based cannabis consulting company owned by local cannabis entrepreneur, and writer of this article, Andrea Unsworth, and her partner Blake Hoffmann. Andrea has a deep history in California’s legacy cannabis market, and has worked in almost all areas of the industry including advocacy, volatile and non-volatile manufacturing, distribution, retail, cultivation, and compliance. This writer brings over a decade of cannabis industry experience and a strong

As California provides grant funding to local equity programs that offer support to those harmed by cannabis criminalization, all states that have an adult-use market would greatly benefit from creating similar models of funding from the tax dollars that this industry generates.



PHOTO CREDIT: ADOLPH WARD



IN THE SUMMER OF 2022, OEC LAUNCHED ITS FIRST PRODUCTS UNDER THE OEC BRAND. PICTURED HERE IS AN EIGHTH OF CANNABIS FLOWER (3.5 GRAMS).

network of operators and professionals throughout the state of California. Blake Hoffmann is an O.G. in California’s cannabis scene, managing and evolving one of the country’s largest smoke shops, The Cave Smoke Shop. Blake’s role at OEC is the Creative Director, handling all of the media, design needs, and packaging and labeling for all products that come through the company. He also leads the manufacturing team, specializing in producing solventless hash rosin and developing many of the SOPs for the facility.

In the summer of 2022, OEC launched its first products under the OEC brand, a two-gram cigar-style pre-rolled blunt, and a four-gram jar of small bud flower. The in-house products sold well, and allowed the team to begin building relationships with retailers, labs, and other manufacturers. The OEC team is driven by a desire to build strong in-house brands and remain fully vested in their community by helping others do the same with lower barriers to entry.

## THE OEC COHORT PROGRAM

At the end of 2022, the OEC selected six cohorts through a competitive application process: two experienced applicants, two somewhat experienced applicants, and two relatively inexperienced applicants. These cohorts will receive 18-months of access to a rent-free kitchen facility, individual secure storage, technical assistance, and mentorship from the OEC management team.

For its first cohort, all of the businesses are women-owned and represent a variety of backgrounds and business goals. The hope is that these operators will receive a more equitable opportunity to be successful, and utilize each other’s networks and resources to elevate one another as partners. Upon completion of the 18-month time period, the OEC will select another cohort of applicants to participate in the program.

## THE EVOLUTION OF THE OAKLAND EQUITY COLLECTIVE

As California provides grant funding to local equity programs that offer support to those harmed by cannabis criminalization, all states that have an adult-use market would greatly benefit from creating similar models of

funding from the tax dollars that this industry generates. Local jurisdictions can help equity businesses by offering the following:

- Priority application processing
- Support in identifying or purchasing real estate
- Access to business partnerships
- Inter-agency advocacy and
- Tax rebates for cannabis businesses: local hiring, purchasing equity products, providing employees with high wages and/or health benefits, or incubating equity applicants.
- Reduced or waived local fees for equity operators
- Technical support, one-on-one consulting and training
- Partnerships with educational institutions
- Help with navigating cannabis licensing and regulatory requirements
- Low- or no-interest loans or grants
- Supporting consumption lounges
- Funding for increased security at or around cannabis business locations

IF YOU’RE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE OAKLAND EQUITY COLLECTIVE, VISIT THEM ONLINE AT [OAKLANDEQUITYCOLLECTIVE.CO](https://oaklandequitycollective.co) OR ON [INSTAGRAM](https://www.instagram.com/oaklandequitycollective) AT [OAKLANDEQUITYCOLLECTIVE](https://www.instagram.com/oaklandequitycollective).



*"Everybody needs to have opportunities to be successful, and we need to have all markets be inclusive. I think it's a great goal to have as a society."*

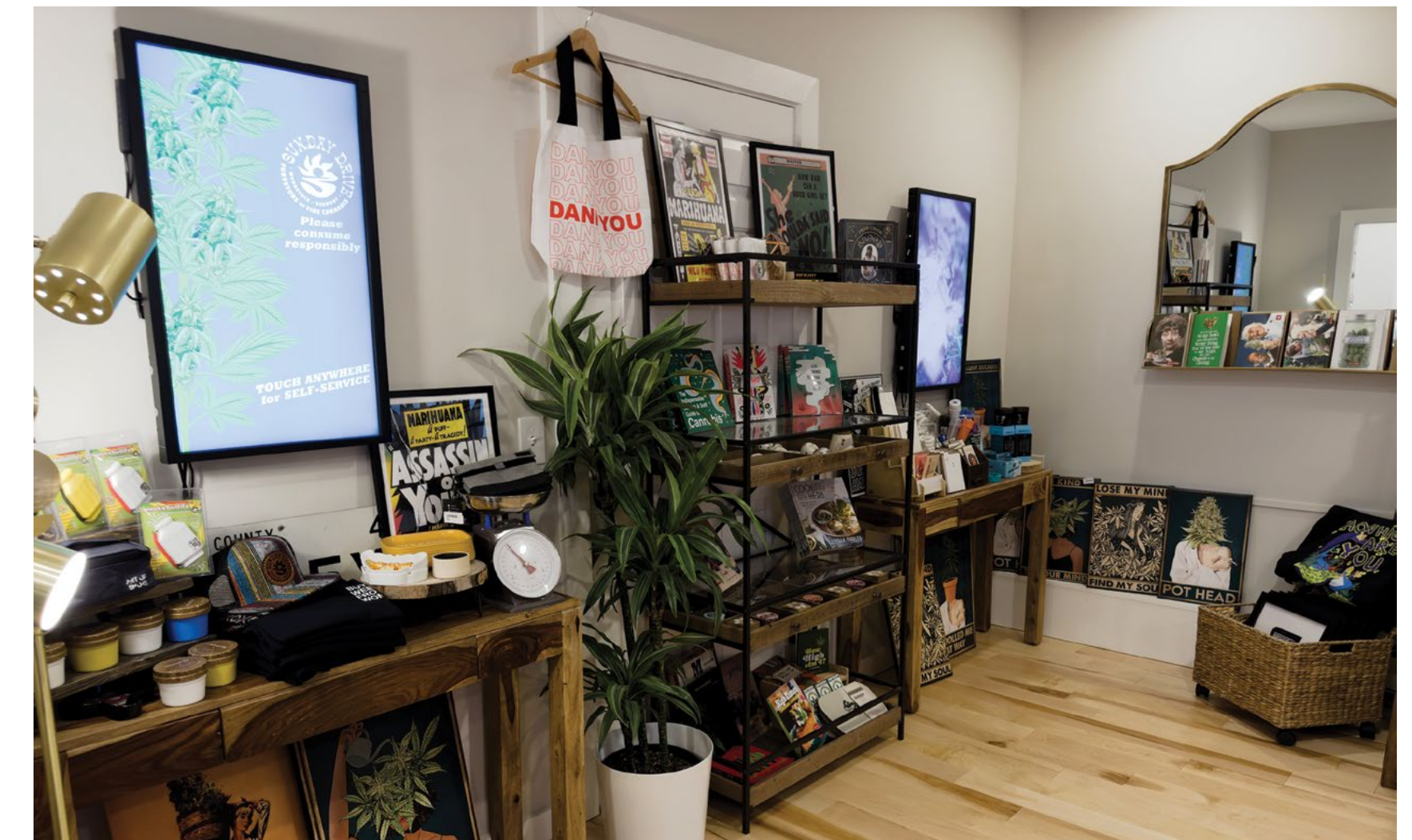
PATRICIA EAMES

WOMEN IN CANNABIS:

# An Interview with the Owner of Sunday Drive

→ On Saturday, October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, the regulated adult use cannabis market opened in Vermont. On November 17<sup>th</sup> that same year, Patricia Eames opened Sunday Drive in Woodstock, Vermont.

→ Sunday Drive is one of the first recreational dispensaries to open in Vermont, and they are one of the several woman-owned dispensaries in the state.



By Teddy Duncan ●

**S**UNDAY DRIVE IS AN INCLUSIVE WOMAN-OWNED AND WOMAN-OPERATED dispensary. In an industry like cannabis, with a demographic makeup of around 70% - 80% male business owners, yet an equal gender demographic of consumers, a woman-owned dispensary is a pleasant outlier. For Eames, running a woman-owned dispensary means a new orientation toward cannabis commerce. At Sunday Drive, operating a dispensary isn't about reducing cannabis to a transactive commodity; Eames seeks to directly engage with the community and empower women while providing customers with quality local products.

**WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN THE CANNABIS INDUSTRY? WERE YOU ALREADY ENGAGED IN OTHER WAYS?**

I own another business called Clover Gift Shop, which I bought in 2008. In 2016, a family tragedy led me to discover CBD. I started using it for anxiety, and found it beneficial. Then, I discovered Green Mountain CBD (Now Sunsoil) in Vermont and ordered 30 bottles of their CBD capsules. I sold out of those within a week at Clover Gift Shop. From there, I started doing more research, and grew my selection of locally crafted CBD products. Clover soon offered the area's largest selection of CBD products, and still does today. In late 2017 I started my own CBD line called Clover Apothecary.

After cannabis legalization happened in Vermont, I joined the local Cannabis Commission to educate the Woodstock residents about what it would mean to have a dispensary here. In Vermont, every city had to vote to allow retail sales of cannabis. When the residents of Woodstock voted to "opt in" to cannabis retail, I had a lot of people come into

Clover and say, "We voted for it because you educated us about the potential benefits of Cannabis, and helped reduce the stigma around it."

When we started selling CBD in Clover Gift Shop, there were some rumors around that I was selling "pot" at Clover. So, it was great to see that positive change in this small community. At the time of the vote, I didn't have concrete plans to open a dispensary, but definitely felt like it was something I needed to do. We luckily found a fantastic spot, and everything fell into place from there.

**A PROMINENT FEATURE OF SUNDAY DRIVE SEEMS TO BE THE LOCALLY PRODUCED CANNABIS PRODUCTS. HOW IMPORTANT ARE LOCALLY SOURCED AND PRODUCED ITEMS FOR SUNDAY DRIVE?**

In Vermont, all the cannabis is locally grown. You can't legally cross state lines with cannabis. That's why there aren't any big national brands. And that's been great because we know our farmers. It's not only local Vermont-made; it's regional as well. We have flower from All Growth Organics

down in Brownsville, which is about 15 minutes away. We've also got Backwoods Farm which is in Bridgewater, just a few miles from Woodstock. My husband grew up with the farmer from Backwoods.

Also, it's been great to see "legacy growers" entering the legal market. They've been producing the best weed for years, and now they can make a living from their craft. Many of the cultivators that we connect with that we sell in the store, the first time I handed them a check for their delivery, they couldn't believe it was happening. It's just so nice to see their dreams come to fruition.

It's a very close-knit community of producers, retailers, manufacturers, cultivators, and it's nice to know people on a personal level. We have a couple MSOs [multi-state operators] popping up here and there. Vermont has a true "craft" mindset, and many retailers are working exclusively with craft cultivators.

In Vermont, we are known for our craft beer, our craft cheese, our Maple syrup, and now we have our craft cannabis market.

**ARE THERE ANY PRODUCTS OR BRANDS THAT YOU'RE PARTICULARLY PROUD OF CARRYING?**

I'm proud of all our producers. We have a few female-run businesses such as Old Growth and Full Circle Farms, Low Key Alchemy, and others. We also have several social equity cultivators. I am really am proud of all of them all, and love working with them.

A lot of the companies have positive impact statements and are donating a portion of their profits to charities. For the month of March (women's history month), we are giving our customers the choice to round up their purchase to the nearest dollar for the Endometriosis Foundation of America and Black Women Health Imperative. We will be matching all donations.

**HOW DOES BEING A WOMAN-OWNED INCLUSIVE COMPANY INFORM SUNDAY DRIVE?**

We just are truly welcoming and inclusive. We're 99% women here [at Sunday Drive]—we do have one amazing man. Cannabis has been beneficial to all of our employees,

VTSUNDAYDRIVE.COM

INSTAGRAM @SUNDAYDRIVEVT

in many different ways. They are passionate about passing on their knowledge and helping people find what works best for them. Sometimes dispensaries can be intimidating, especially if you're new to cannabis. We want all of our customers to feel welcome and comfortable, whether they're a newbie or a connoisseur.

**THE BURGEONING CANNABIS ENTREPRENEURIAL ECONOMY CONSISTS OF 80-90% MALES (THIS NUMBER VARIES IN SOME REPORTS). WHY DO YOU THINK THAT SHIFTING THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF CANNABIS IS IMPORTANT?**

It is so important. In any industry you need to include everybody. You need to consider all points of view and experiences. That's important across the board: for people of color, women, gender non-conforming people; everybody needs to have opportunities to be successful, and we need to have all markets be inclusive. I think it's a great goal to have as a society. Being a woman doesn't make me any less capable than anyone else. Being Black doesn't make anyone

less capable. Everybody is capable of success, and it just needs to be recognized.

**SUNDAY DRIVE FOREGROUNDS ITS TEAM OF BUTTENDERS AND OTHERS—FEATURING EACH EMPLOYEE ON THE WEBSITE AND INSTAGRAM. HOW DO THE EMPLOYEES CONTRIBUTE TO THE STORE AND MAKE IT WHAT IT IS?**

They're everything; they're so amazing. I feel like the luckiest dispensary owner in the state, in the country. They're kind, knowledgeable, and empathetic. They are patient and there is no drama. They all get along. We are closed on Wednesdays, so all of my employees have that day off, but they are usually hanging out with each other, enjoying cannabis. (Sometimes they even invite me!) They're all fantastic people.

They also appreciate the small business mindset and way of running things. Everything here is very small business. There isn't an HR team: there's me. I've been so lucky; I can't even tell you. I wish I could pay them so much more.

**TELL ME ABOUT THE (WONDERFUL) NAME. FOR ME, IT INVOKES SOMETHING SERENE AND FAMILIAL. WHY "SUNDAY DRIVE"?**

My husband grows a strain called Sunday Brunch. It's our favorite strain; he's been growing it for a long time. One day he asked what the name of the strain was, and I was like, "it's called Sunday Brunch." He said that he wasn't a brunch guy. And he goes, "I prefer a Sunday drive, so I'm just going to call it Sunday Drive." It stemmed from that. And the many people that come to Woodstock tell us they are out on a Sunday drive. It's just kind of all come together for Sunday Drive.

*Interview has been edited for brevity & clarity*

# The Emerald™ Magazine

## 420 Holiday Gift Guide —



IN MEDIA PARTNERSHIP

### Moose Labs



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#### MOUTHPEACE

This silicone device serves two purposes. First, the included Filters work to remove resin, tar, and other contaminants to give a cleaner, better tasting puff. The second benefit is that it serves as a sanitary smoking device to help prevent the spread of germs at consumption events and while sharing with friends. It is designed to fit with bong, pipes, vapes, joints and more. **\$9.99**

#### MOUTHPEACE FILTERS

Carbon activated filters absorb contaminants, tar and resin. They are triple layered, catching larger particles and unwanted pull through. Smaller molecules can still pass through, so don't worry about losing the good stuff. **\$7.99**

### Smoke Proper

#### CUSTOM DRAWN "SMOKEBREAK" METAL ROLLING TRAY

Metal rolling tray. Medium sized, 11.25 x 7.5 x 1 in. Great for rolling up at the home or on the go for an adventure. **\$15**



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#### ROLLING KIT

All-in-one, on the go, water & scent resistant container that holds everything you would need to roll & store your own joints. For those who like to roll up but hate not having everything they need conveniently in one spot, we've solved the problem. The device includes 10-15ft of rolling paper by the roll (RAW & Elements) to which a smoker can actually customize their own length based on their mood. The unit also comes with hidden herb & joint storage along with smoking accessories to help roll up on the go. Just Rip it, Roll it, Roast it!! **\$19.99 (Free shipping)**



THE SOCIAL EQUITY ISSUE



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**BOGO 50% Sale on THC Mood Gummies Bottles!** Plus, get a FREE packet of 10 THC Mood Gummies by signing up for Rare Cannabinoid Company's mailing list, or by spending \$99+

Rare Cannabinoid Company is also announcing weekly 420 deals and price drops all month long! Sign up for their newsletter so you don't miss out and you'll also receive a coupon code for a packet of 10 THC Mood Gummies (worth \$25). Already signed up? Spend \$99+ and you'll automatically receive a FREE packet of THC Gummies!

THC Mood Gummies packets contain 10 gummies and cost \$25  
THC Mood Gummies bottles contain 30 gummies and cost \$49

### RARE Cannabinoid Company

#### THC MOOD GUMMIES

Celebrate 420 with incredible sales on the world's first THC + CBC & CBD Mood Gummies. Each gummy contains 5mg Delta-9-THC plus high levels of CBC for mood improvement and CBD for the entourage effect. Vegan and naturally flavored with fresh lime and mint, they contain a full spectrum, hemp-derived THC oil and ship to all 50 States.

smokeproper.com

#### CLOTHING: TANK TOPS, T-SHIRTS, HOODIES, ZIP UP JACKETS, HATS

Clothing and apparel designed for the adventurous outdoor type who likes to roll up and enjoy mother nature in style. All our designs were created in mind to collaborate the art of rolling a joint with the beauty of mother nature. We sampled multiple garments and went with what we felt was the very best most expensive material, we use Bella Canvas for our Tee's and Tanks, and Independent Clothing Brand for our high quality sweatshirts. **Hoodies: \$59.99**



# High On Love

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IN MEDIA PARTNERSHIP



**CBD OBJECTS OF LUXURY GIFT SET**



**CBD WATER BASED LUBRICANT**

Banish discomfort, sweeten sensations and elevate your intimate moments with **HighOnLove's Water-Based Lubricant**, made with 200 mg of premium CBD. Smooth and never sticky, it's made with clean ingredients and safe for use with all types of condoms. It's also fragrance-free and non-staining. **\$48.00**



**CBD BATH & BODY OIL**

Turn bath time into a truly spa-worthy experience with this luxurious bath and body oil, blended with 300 mg of premium CBD and essential oils of Patchouli, Geranium and Ylang Ylang. **HighOnLove Sensual Bath Oil** can be used in three ways: Apply liberally while showering or bathing to hydrate skin and retain moisture, add a few drops to warm bath water to pamper skin and release a soothing aroma, or use as an everyday moisturizer by massaging into skin. **\$48.00**

Indulge in an experience of unparalleled pleasure with the **Objects of Luxury kit**, featuring HighOnLove CBD Sensual Massage Oil — in our limited-edition scent Sugar High — and our premium bedazzled silicone body wand. Blended with 500 MG premium CBD, our skin-nourishing massage oil helps ease muscle tension, increase energy flow and stimulate circulation to bring body and mind to a state of bliss. The powerful USB-rechargeable body wand is suitable for use in water and features 5 incremental speeds to stimulate your erogenous zones and awaken your sensuality. **\$180.00**

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Most thorough cleansing program designed for anyone that has a very high level of daily exposure to toxins. All toxins are removed permanently with this 10-day detox program. This program includes pre-cleanse formula, a daily herbal supplement, easy instructions, and a detox diet menu to help your body rid itself of unwanted toxins. 3 free home test kits are included.

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Best-selling program, designed for people with a high level of exposure to toxins. All toxins are removed permanently with this 5-day detox program. Includes pre-cleanse formula, a daily herbal supplement, easy instructions, and a detox diet menu to help your body rid itself of unwanted toxins. 2 free home test kits are included.



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# OCB

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**OCB X WAKIT STICKER COLLAGE LIMITED SERIES BUNDLE**

This limited-series OCB kit is a complete bundle for smokers that need it all. The included **OCB x Wakit Electric Grinder** collaboration with patented ball & chain technology, mills and preps your dry herbs in seconds and is rechargeable. With a few short taps, the **Wakit** delivers a consistent grind from coarse to fine. Pair this with the included **OCB Medium Flower Tray**, **OCB Bamboo 1-1/4" Roller**, and **OCB Bamboo 1-1/4" Rolling Papers** (America's first bamboo papers), and you're ready to roll. The bundle is regularly **\$80** but is on sale for **\$39.99**



**BAMBOO COMBO CONE KIT**

OCB has the perfect offering for environmentally conscious smokers. The kit comes with an **OCB Bamboo Rolling Tray**, **OCB Bamboo Ashtray**, and three 6-packs of **OCB Bamboo 1-1/4" Cones** for **\$44.25**



**OCB ROLLING PAPERS AND TRAY BUNDLE**

This 4/20, celebrate and save 75% on a kit that includes a bundle of their **Bamboo, Brown Rice, Organic Hemp, and Unbleached papers** along with a hand-selected, artist-inspired & designed metal **rolling tray** - all for just **\$4.99** - when you join the OCB community for information, news, and offers.

**OCB Brown Rice paper** is the latest in its lineup and is America's only real rice paper. The GMO-free rice fibers are ethically sourced & responsibly harvested from France's Camargue River delta and made with water from the French Alps. Unbleached and ultra-thin, these acacia-gummed papers deliver a premium rolling and slow-burning experience.

# Sunday Drive

vtsundaydrive.com



Premium Rolling Paper with Natural Gum **Free** when you stop in

**10 PACK BISCOTTI SUNDAY DOG WALKERS**

Hybrid high in Ocimene and Caryophyllene. Grown by Sun Day Farms in Woodstock VT. **\$49**



**5 PACK/ 1 GRAM LEMON JEFFREY PREROLLS**

Sativa Dominant Hybrid high in Limonene. Grown by Weed Connections in Mendon VT. **\$49**



**3.5 GRAM STRAWBERRY DIESEL FLOWER**

Indica Dominant Hybrid, high in Linalool, Myrcene, Limonene. Grown by Backwoods Farm in Bridgewater VT. **\$40**

Blazing a Trail for Equity:

# A Look at How the NY CAURD Coalition is Promoting Social Equity in Cannabis

The New York cannabis market is one of the most eagerly anticipated in the world. With a projected value of over \$4 billion by 2027, CAURD-licensed retailers are positioned at the forefront. But the road to success in this new market is not without challenge. Though the state's unprecedented approach to social equity has garnered significant attention and support, navigating the complexities of the cannabis industry with no precedent to follow can prove difficult.

By Rita Thompson ●

# D

ESPIE THE CHALLENGES, CAURD (Conditional Adult-Use Retail Dispensaries) applicants are hopeful about the opportunities presented by the New York cannabis market. To ensure that CAURD applicants are successful, a group known as the CAURD Coalition is providing a platform for applicants to communicate and share resources in a meaningful way.

exclusive training events for members with Treez, a popular point-of-sale system servicing retail dispensaries. "Trainings with larger organizations allow our potential license holders to understand these platforms and make more informed decisions," explained Tantalo. "The Coalition has also held events like the "Cannabis Forward Reception," offering opportunities to network with leading members of the cannabis industry, elected officials, and key influencers in the New York State government. "There are a lot of people out there doing a lot of great work, but there's no way to link us all," Tantalo noted. "Not everybody knows what's out there or how to find it. Being able to be an access portal and being able to allow people to move freely through the space is critical."

#### NAVIGATING CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES

Though the CAURD application process and window have ended, the challenges and obstacles faced by applications are far from over. Despite the growing push for social equity, challenges related to funding continue to plague the industry. "The real challenge we applicants now face is acquiring start-up capital while proactively educating ourselves about all things cannabis retail," says Marte.

Programs like DASNY have done a lot to support and contribute. However, most resources don't cover operational start-up costs such as product procurement, employee hiring, and onboarding, communication technology, marketing, data management, analytics, etc. And with the recent collapse of two U.S. mid-sized lenders, raising capital has become even more complex. "Investors are becoming more cautious, and cannabis is a high-risk investment," Marte added.

#### SUPPORTING SOCIAL CHANGE

Social equity programs and initiatives like CAURD Coalitions are not only critical to addressing the historical injustices of cannabis prohibitions but promote economic opportunity and empowerment for marginalized communities.

If you're interested in getting involved or supporting the CAURD Coalition, don't hesitate to reach out. "The idea is to link everybody to great companies that are non-predatory, and we are open to work," Tantalo added. For other underrepresented individuals interested in pursuing careers in the cannabis industry, Marte has five points of advice:

- Read every news article focused on cannabis in and outside of your state
- Get to know your local and state representatives
- Get to know your state cannabis regulators on a first-name basis
- Visit cannabis farms and manufacturers
- Become as much of an expert on cannabinoid science as you possibly can

"The more you understand the plant and what it can do, the more you'll understand how to give your future clientele the best possible product experience," Marte added. "Use the time you have right now to research, network, conceptualize, and plan. BE PATIENT." ♦♦♦

#### THE CAURD COALITION

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, around 70% of small businesses fail in the first ten years. Rather than sit back and wait for the government to provide resources, CAURD applicants Britni Tantalo, Jayson Tantalo, Coss Marte, and Jeremy Rivera formed The NY CAURD Coalition to educate and inform the state's future cannabis retailers. Consisting of over 100 members, the CAURD Coalition is committed to ensuring that the benefits of legalization are accessible to all New Yorkers – regardless of race, gender, or socioeconomic status.

"When that small business is in the cannabis sector, the chances of failure are high," says Coss Marte, Co-founder of the CAURD Coalition and founder of CONBUD, told *The Emerald*. Marte received a CAURD license for his dispensary, CONBUD, in April 2023. "When that small business is being run by a Black or Brown person, with limited access to capital and a RAP sheet, the chances of failure now become astronomical," he explained. "The mission of the CAURD Coalition is to combine resources, share knowledge, invest in one another's success, and rise together."

About a third of the group comprises licensed cultivators, processors, and dispensary license holders. "A lot of people were lost trying to navigate [the industry]," Co-founder Britni Tantalo told *The Emerald*, emphasizing the importance of collaboration over competition. "We've been able to find our way and find our place by helping each other."

#### COLLABORATION OVER COMPETITION

The NY CAURD Coalition has established an access portal that leads the whole supply chain – enabling cultivators, processors, applicants, and current license holders to communicate with each other for free, facilitating collaboration between and streamlining the supply chain process. Through its efforts, the group aims to create a more equitable and inclusive pool of dispensaries in the New York market and provide peer-led education and training.

"I found out about plenty of resources from my peers," says Marte. "The biggest thing is that we share understanding and compassion for one another because we're going through the same uneasy process together."

The group has launched several initiatives to promote social equity in New York's emerging cannabis industry and recently began offering

MURRAY YARAVITZ



BRITNI TANTALO IN DOWNTOWN ROCHESTER, NY

CONTACT THE COALITION AT [NYCAURDCOALITION@GMAIL.COM](mailto:NYCAURDCOALITION@GMAIL.COM) OR ON INSTAGRAM @NEWYORKCAURDCOALITION

# Smashing the Grass Ceiling: The Importance of LGBTQIA+ Representation in Cannabis

By Rita Thompson ●



PHOTO CREDIT: GABBY POLK

DANIELLE GREY AND BRANDÉ ELISE, CO-FOUNDERS OF UNOIA CBD.

With a history of activism and advocacy for marginalized groups, the LGBTQIA+ community has played a significant role in the legalization and normalization of cannabis.

**W**ITH THE CRIMINALIZATION OF THE PLANT HISTORICALLY USED AS A tool to target marginalized groups, LGBTQIA+ activists and allies came to the forefront of the fight against prohibition.

When the federal response to the AIDS crisis of the 1980s and 1990s failed, trailblazers like Mary "Brownie Mary" Rathbun and Dennis Peron championed Proposition 215, California's law permitting the use of medical marijuana, and saw that cannabis could effectively treat AIDS-related symptoms when very few other options could.

**THE CURRENT STATE OF THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY IN CANNABIS**  
Fast forward to today, and the role of the LGBTQIA+ community in cannabis continues to expand. However, progress toward a truly inclusive and diverse industry has been slow and incremental.

A *Business Insider* analysis found that white men comprise 70% of top executives at the 14 largest cannabis companies. While there is an ongoing push for diversity, the gatekeepers of cannabis culture and commerce remain overwhelmingly white, cis, straight, and male. Corporations dominated by these individuals not only lead the industry, but actively push queer individuals and people of color out, perpetuating systemic discrimination and marginalization.

While social equity programs like The Seeding Opportunity Initiative in New York serve as stepping stones for including racial and ethnic minorities in the world of weed, considerations for LGBTQIA+ status seem few and far between. Centering the voices of the queer community and including them in leadership roles is not only appropriate given the history, but quintessential to establishing inclusive teams, products, and marketing.

**CREATING SPACE FOR QUEERS IN CANNABIS**

Brie Brewer, the founder of The Proud Mary Network, emphasizes the importance of exploring the intersection of queer identity and cannabis beyond simple representation. "Learn as much as you can about the experience of queer people in cannabis and, second, get involved in making a difference."

According to Brewer, this means recruiting, hiring, and promoting queer people in your organization, working with queer suppliers and partners, and advocating for public policy advancements that support queer entrepreneurs and professionals in the cannabis industry.

If you're unsure where to start, Brewer's Proud Mary Network is happy to be a resource. Bothered by the lack of forward-facing, queer representation in today's industry, The Proud Mary Network was created to support queer voices within the cannabis industry.

"When I attended a big-name cannabis trade show back in 2019, the lack of queer representation was surprising to me, given how instrumental a role queer people played in legalizing cannabis in the first place," said Brewer.

The group offers an arsenal of resources, some of which include networking events to offer opportunities for queers to establish connections and experiences they may otherwise not have. "To think that we've been pushed into the background now that the industry is booming when we were catalysts for legalization motivated me to make a difference," Brewer noted.

Proud Mary Network was also the first ever dedicated queer representation space at any cannabis trade show. They brought people from the Proud Mary Network to meet industry leaders and forge new connections. "We are also working on developing a job board to help queer people identify queer-friendly places to work in the industry," she added.

**INTERSECTIONALITY AND THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY IN CANNABIS**

Considering how social equity initiatives can address intersectional issues and create a more inclusive and diverse industry is vital to building a more sustainable and equitable

cannabis ecosystem. By centering the voices and experiences of LGBTQIA+ individuals, especially those in underrepresented communities, we can create a more just and equitable cannabis industry for all.

Danielle Gray, Co-founder and CEO of the Atlanta-based CBD company World of Unioia says she would love to see more queer, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) representation in all aspects of the business, including lab testing, marketing, accounting, legal, and manufacturing. "We are often challenged with having the resources to fund new initiatives, test campaigns, and hire good public relations firms," Gray explained. "Many other companies have comfort and padding to mess up. We simply do not have the room," she noted.

Recognizing the lack of representation in this industry, Gray also mentioned the difficulties that small, queer, or woman minority-owned businesses face getting their products into stores. In an industry generally populated by big, mainstream brands, Unioia is focused on sharing the gift of beautiful thinking and proving that smaller companies should be given a fair shot on the shelves, too. "I believe when a company is professional and clean at every angle, they should be given a fair shot to be on the shelves," Gray emphasized. "By placing our cartoon faces on some of our products and branding, we are making a statement that these two black, queer women can provide products that you can trust will be around for years to come."

Her advice for BIPOC, queer-identifying individuals in the cannabis industry, is to explore all the ways you can be part of this industry. "Align [yourself] with good people, and usually good business will follow," said Gray. "If it doesn't feel right, it probably isn't right! Trust your gut and be sure you are offering value as you hope to provide value to others."

**THE FUTURE OF THE LGBTQIA+ REPRESENTATION IN CANNABIS**

The cannabis industry has the potential to be a powerful tool for social change, but the work is far from over. Both Brewer and Gray say that while they have seen steps in the right direction, a significant need remains for opportunities and platforms for the Queer community in cannabis.

"I've seen some definite improvement over the past few years, which has been encouraging, but I do think we still have a long way to go as an industry," noted Brewer. "There remains a lot to be desired when it comes to providing platforms for queer entrepreneurs and professionals in the space, many of whom are leaders in their own right but don't always have the opportunity to showcase their talents and accomplishments." ♦♦♦



BRIE BREWER FOUNDER OF THE PROUD MARY NETWORK



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