

A Life Rooted in Family, Service, & Community

By Brandilyn Hallcroft

For Susie Lee, home has always been about more than a house or a neighborhood. It is about opening the door, bringing people together, helping others feel welcome, and doing her part to strengthen the community around her.

Susie raised her two children, Nevada "Nevie" Lee, 26, and Cody Lee, 21, in Eagle Hills. The family moved to the neighborhood when Nevie was in third grade, and Summerlin became the backdrop for countless family traditions, outdoor adventures, celebrations, and everyday moments.

"I love living in Southern Nevada, and especially Summerlin," Susie shared. "It's been a great place to raise my children."

Susie's commitment to family, hard work, and community service began long before she arrived in Nevada. Born and raised in a working-class family of 10 in Canton, Ohio, she grew up as one of eight children. Her father was a military veteran who worked in a steel plant, while her mother stayed home to care for their large family.

Susie's first job was delivering newspapers, not simply to earn spending money, but to help her parents make ends meet. After graduating from public schools, she attended Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, paying for her education through scholarships, loans, and part-time jobs. Mindful of the financial burden, she completed a five-year program that allowed her to accomplish six years of college-level work in less time.

Following graduation, Susie worked for an environmental economics consulting firm in Boston. In 1993, she moved to Las Vegas, arriving during the intense heat of August and wondering what she was doing in the middle of the desert. She soon found her purpose here.

When Jan Jones Blackhurst launched her campaign to become Nevada's first female governor, Susie jumped at the opportunity to get involved. Although the campaign was unsuccessful, it led to another important chapter when Jones Blackhurst established the MASH Center, a one-stop resource center serving people experiencing homelessness, and asked Susie to run it.



Susie had never worked specifically in the homelessness field, but she understood nonprofit leadership. More importantly, she felt increasingly drawn to work that could create lasting opportunities for children and families.

Several years later, the late Elaine Wynn recruited Susie to establish the Inner-City Games, now known as After-School All-Stars. Susie later served as president of Communities In Schools of Nevada, helping it grow into the state's largest dropout prevention program. Her years of nonprofit leadership ultimately helped shape her approach to public service and her work in Congress.



Throughout her career, Susie was fortunate to learn from pioneering women who served as mentors and demonstrated the difference strong leadership can make. Those lessons, combined with the values she learned from her parents, continue to guide her today.

While Susie's professional life has centered on service, her personal life has always revolved around her children, her community, and plenty of time outdoors.

Sports were an important part of Susie's childhood. She and her siblings participated primarily in swimming and basketball, and Susie became both a synchronized and competitive swimmer. She continued competing throughout high school and at Carnegie Mellon University.

That love of athletics was passed down to Nevie and Cody. When they were young, Susie encouraged them to try different activities until they discovered sports they genuinely enjoyed. Between the two children, those experiments included soccer, fencing, competitive swimming, and basketball. Cody eventually found his place playing lacrosse with Rough Riders Lacrosse, while Nevie participated in synchronized swimming with the Nevada Desert Mermaids. Drawing on her own experience as a collegiate swimmer, Susie even stepped in to help coach the Desert Mermaids.

Nevie was also a Girl Scout, Cody was a Boy Scout, and both children took piano lessons with Miss Maya in Summerlin. Sundays often began with a family hike in Red Rock Canyon, a tradition Susie credits with helping her children develop their own appreciation for nature.

Today, the family continues to enjoy hiking, biking, skiing, and climbing at Red Rock. Susie is an avid hiker and cyclist and can often be found on the trails at Red Rock Canyon before her workday begins. She also enjoys supporting Southern Nevada's small businesses and restaurants and connecting with residents at local community events.

At home, Susie is joined by her two dogs, Bridger, a Labradoodle, and Teton, a Sheepadoodle. The dogs fit naturally into a family that has never needed much of an excuse to celebrate. Susie once organized



After more than three decades in Las Vegas, Susie continues to appreciate the people and places that make Southern Nevada feel like home. She believes maintaining a strong community is a shared responsibility that requires residents to participate, speak up, and remain engaged.



"Southern Nevada is an incredible place to live, work, and raise your kids, and it's because of all the incredible residents who call it home," Susie said. "It takes all of us to continue to keep this a great place to raise our families. We all need to pitch in, get involved, speak up, and especially, vote."

For Susie, that message is not simply about public service. It reflects the way she has lived throughout her life: working hard, welcoming others, showing up for her neighbors, and never missing an opportunity to bring people together.

a neighborhood dog birthday party, complete with a birthday cake made from dog food. She also hosted an 11/11/11 party and always made sure Nevie and Cody's birthdays felt special.

Hosting has long been one of Susie's favorite ways to bring people together. Thanksgiving and Easter were major occasions in the Lee household, and Susie made a point of inviting anyone who might not have somewhere else to go. At least one evening each week, friends or family could be found gathered in her backyard for a barbecue.

Her enthusiasm for creating community extended throughout Eagle Hills. When her children were younger, Susie organized neighborhood scavenger hunts that sent local kids door-to-door collecting items from houses along the block. Halloween remains her favorite holiday, and she especially loves greeting generations of trick-or-treaters at her home.

Travel is another important part of the family's story. Whether in summer or winter, Susie, Nevie, and Cody enjoy taking an outdoor-focused trip each year. The specific destination may change, but mountains, nature, and time together remain the common thread.

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