

## Maya Tate



Maya (They/He/She) currently lives in Davis and goes to school at UC Davis, but grew up in the South Bay. He's the founder of Queers United in Community Care (QUICC) which is a mutual aid group led by queer and trans people.

**Transcript:** Filmed in Cupertino on 3/27/23

0:00

Alex

Okay. So the first thing I want to ask you is tell everyone what's your name and what do you do for a living? Just where you are.

0:13

Maya

Okay. I'm looking at you. Okay. So my name is Maya. I'm currently a student at UC Davis. I currently work as a mechanic on buses at my university's system. And I'm a student pretty much full time. Yeah.

0:30

Alex

Cool. And can you talk about , tell everyone what your organization is?

0:35

Maya

So I'm being interviewed about QUICC, which is Queers United in Community Care were a mutual aid organization that kind of formed out of the George Floyd like protests that we originally started off doing medical work for, like active protest situations, but we now do a lot of more like mutual aid and food distribution and like basic first aid care outside of protest situations.

1:08

Alex

Can you talk about why mutual aid is so important, like when the government can't be there to help you, especially if you're trans?

1:16

Maya

Yeah, I think I mean, houseless people, first of all, are just like very, let's see. And as people in the Bay Area are left like really, really unsupported from like everything from like food, housing, obviously medical care and then like trans and queer and un-housed people and trans and queer youth are just even more marginalized, even within a lot of other like mutual aid type organizations, especially religious organizations.

1:48

Maya

We all know the Salvation Army is like super homophobic transphobic. So there's a real need for like queer and trans people to be getting access to mutual aid like support. So it's really important to me that we have a group that is staffed by people who are queer and trans, who do work explicitly like geared towards and for queer and trans people who are unhoused or who are in need of aid.

2:16

Alex

Yeah. And can you talk about also why like unhoused trans people are so underrepresented when we talk about like the trans community, and how we can help them?

2:27

Maya

Yeah, I mean, I think that when we look at when we talk about just as a society like unhoused people, we really miss how many of those people are queer or trans in some way and we miss that. Queer and trans people need specific services more than medicine, more than food, more than like housing. They also may need help with hormonal like with hormones, immediate access to that kind of medication, which is very specific, and mutual aid organization don't really know about.

3:03

Maya

They may need post-operative support and care. A lot of what we do is caring for people who've had like FFS or top surgery or bottom surgery or whatever, which is, again, like post-operative care in general, something that is kind of hard to find for any un-housed person, but it's especially difficult for somebody who is transgender to have like specific care.

3:25

Maya

So, yeah, there's just a lot of like missing elements of mutual aid when it comes to unhoused, queer and trans people.

3:32

Alex

Yeah. And you mentioned FFS, and probably no one will know what that is.

Maya

Yeah.

Alex

Can you explain that and also explain why transitioning is so important to trans people and the struggles that they go through in order to do that.

3:46

Maya

Yeah. So when I say FFS, I mean facial feminization surgery, which is a surgery typically that trans feminine individuals undertake to change the physical bone structure of their faces, there's also breast removal or reduction surgeries, and then there are like sex reassignment surgeries. So all these surgeries are really important for like the overall mental well-being of a transgender person.

4:12

Maya

Of course, not everybody choose to have them, but those who do, it's very important for them and it just really helps you live more peacefully within yourself and like feel more confident and capable and competent, which can also help, you know, a lot of mental health things. So it's really important that just because a person like doesn't have access to all the things that a housed person might, that they still have access to gender affirming care, either in the form of hormones or surgeries that they have access to care after those surgeries, things like facial feminization surgery, you can only eat liquids for, you know, a couple of days to like a month because your

4:52

Maya

face is really swollen and people who have. So that's like a specific sort of care that, you know, you need to know about when you take care of someone, somebody who has top surgery, can't

do much reaching, picking up, lifting heavy things. And if they're un-housed that, you know, it's really difficult if you're moving around all the time.

5:09

Maya

So having specific care where people understand like this person's going to need help moving their stuff around in a way that they otherwise would not have is really important for a lot of unhoused people.

5:20

Alex

And what are some of the reasons someone wouldn't be able to access like those type of things?

Maya

I mean, lack of medical insurance, if they've lost a job. A lot of people I know who became unhoused had to cancel surgeries because they didn't have a place that they could recover its expensive to be able to get different kinds of surgeries, to be able to get hormone therapies. So like, I mean, you know, just lack of financial access and the lack of access to a safe place to recover has really like I know a lot of people have moved back surgeries because of that.

6:00

Alex

Yeah, that's something that's important. Everyone should know.

Maya

Yeah.

Alex

So your organization is based around, like, mutual aid and community?

Maya

Yeah. Yeah. I would say a lot of what we do is food distribution and we partner with different people. We help people fill out like tax, sort of like do their taxes in a way that would help them get like childcare, like, um, like tax benefits for taking your children. So a lot of like educating people on how to do that.

6:34

Maya

And then a lot of what I do is provide like just like first aid because like I have access to gauze and saline and like different like ways of cleaning rooms that are prohibitively expensive for somebody who's un-housed but may not require them to go to the emergency room. So it's sort of like preventative care. So a lot of like room cleaning a lot of stuff that's between emergency,

like less than emergency, but more than like a band aid, which is really important, and like, a need that were really working to fill.

7:07

Alex

Okay. Thanks for talking about that. And now I want to talk about some more stuff about your own gender. Like growing up in the Bay Area, how did that influence how you saw yourself and your gender and everything?

Maya

The gender thing is weird. Yeah.

7:27

Alex

Oh can you start with like a sentence, like growing up in the Bay Area, I think that...

Maya

Got it. Yeah. Let me think about that. Growing up in the Bay Area has given me a lot of access to people of other genders that I think has been like really, really valuable in helping me see and understand myself. And I feel really grateful for that. And I definitely think that the Bay Area like is really unique in that, um, I think Oakland has just Oakland and San Francisco have just fabulous for like seeing other genders and working through QUICC as well.

8:13

Maya

I've been exposed to a lot of other trans people. Was that okay? like the barrier part? Okay, do we keep talking about it? Okay.

Alex

Anything you want people to know.

Maya

Okay. Yeah. I mean, so I guess to connect it back to the QUICC thing. So a lot of the people who worked with QUICC especially other people were are trans fems that trans feminine individuals, trans women and I'm trans masculine and I you know but I really found a lot in like working with those women like they were really hard ass like really the backbone of a lot of the work we did.

8:54

Maya

And I really think that the just desire to do mutual aid and like all the people who like joined in and did that like was very special, very I feel like the attitude was just really like this is like Bay Area, like strong for unique and like they gave me a lot of insight and like safety and just thinking about my own gender.

9:15

Maya

I think my gender and sexuality are pretty like tied up. I'm still having like a hard time figuring it out. But I, you know, I identify as a lesbian both on the gender side and the sexuality side. And like lesbian as a gender has definitely like that was something that I picked up from a lot of like trans feminine people and from like a lot of the people I just seen in the Bay Area, like going to pride and just walking around.

9:41

Maya

So yeah, hitting the Bay has some really awesome people that have really been helping me figure out the gender and sexuality and just find like really safe community. And doing that through QUICC has also been like an even better way of just like putting me in there and also getting to help out other people who are like me or, you know, or not at all like me. Yeah, I think the Bay has a lot of really cool people.

10:07

Alex

Yeah, that's great. And you mentioned something about lesbian being a gender and that's, I think something that everyone should know is just like the diversity of the trans community. Yeah, and the fact that there's just no rules to everything.

10:20

Maya

Yeah, it's for sure. I mean, like, I feel like we're sort of running into recategorizing ourselves. This is, you know, an increasing issue. I think that people are forgetting that you can just do whatever you want. I think that if anybody's going to watch this, they should like take away like you have other people and you should do whatever the hell you call yourself, whatever you want.

10:42

Maya

And yeah, I feel more comfortable identifying as a lesbian on the genders sort of thing than I do as a trans man or anything. But yeah, I don't know. I play with it. You can do literally whatever you want. It doesn't matter. That was another thing that like being with all these people who are just like, they're not like not all of them are trans women or trans men or, you know, gay or lesbian or this or that or the other.

11:09

Maya

Like they're just having a good time with it. And people are changing labels every couple of months. It was like this, Great, I don't care. It's really freeing. It's really relaxing when you're just

like, let go. You can do whatever you want. You can be like, when I was younger, I was like, Oh my God, bi-lesbians are like bad.

11:27

Maya

Like, it doesn't matter bi-lesbians are cool because just like people who are nice to you and whatever. So, like, I just, you know, be chill to other people and it'll help you and it'll help you figure yourself up. I think if you relax a little bit.

11:41

Alex

You know, some good advice and now you live outside of the Bay Area, right. So can you tell me the differences that the trans community in the Bay Area and outside of it, how you're going through life and stuff?

Maya

Yeah. So I live in Davis. The community is different and so it's first of all, it's way more like colleges, College town and I really miss San Francisco and Oakland. I wasn't even like that in the culture necessarily but I really miss the people there. It's not the same I feel I feel a lot more lonely and the like Gay hangout spots are different.

12:21

Maya

They're a lot younger. In Oakland, you can still find like there's like leather daddies around. There's like the dikes on bikes, there's like all sorts of crazy people doing great ship their gender. It's a little harder to find that I feel in Sacramento in Davis. The the age difference is definitely like definitely a big part of it. I think most people who I interact with in Oakland were like, at least thirties, but now they're kind of closer in their twenties, they're all closer to my age and the maturity is different I think as well.

12:53

Maya

So yeah, like the Oakland Queer and Trans community, the San Francisco, the Bay, like queer and trans community is really, really powerful. They do a lot of really cool like powerful stuff. They do music for each other and they do mutual aid for each other. And I feel like Sacramento is kind of lacking in that regard. It just doesn't have quite the same like power. But, you know, I've only been there for six months. But definitely the Bay Queer and Trans Community is really strong and like there.

13:24

Alex

And you mentioned that those older people in Oakland by that meaning in their thirties and that's a big problem that we consider elders or just in their thirties, and can you talk about poverty problems.

13:37

Maya

Yeah I mean like a 30 year old is like nothing I'm like, you know, like life begins at 30. I feel like as a 20 year old, 21 year old, I've just been here for like 2 seconds. I think when I hit 30, I'm really happy and I feel like me looking up to all these people who are in their thirties.

13:53

Maya

Mid thirties is like on the one hand, like gay people who are like at least like ten years older than me. But on the other hand, it's like shit like were all 60, 70, 80 year olds. A lot of older dikes, a lot of older, like fatties, like that kind of gone. It's too expensive for them to live here.

14:11

Maya

But yeah, I think that, you know, if you get into it with the, the Bay Area, like with the queer and trans community, you'll find people who are a little older than you and that can be really healing. Just seeing somebody who's just like a decade older than me being like, just chill. I'm like, I'm like this today. And it's like, Whoa, I can do that.

14:30

Maya

Definitely. Like seeing that has helped me feel a lot less lonely and a lot less like crazy. I'm just going through questioning your gender. It makes me feel like makes me feel crazy, but like seeing older people is just like, Yeah.

14:45

Alex

You're saying older people cause you to have hope right?

Maya

Yeah. No, it definitely gives you hope. It definitely gives you a sense of like there will be an enduring community for me when I get to be 30. When I get to be 40, like no matter how many, like friendships are gone all over the place because that's just how it is when you're young, like there will still be people around you. And the Bay is like a really good way to see that.

15:03

Alex

Yeah, yeah, that's great. And now I want to talk about like how you interact with cis people, which I know that it's always really like something lonely and hard. Yeah. I'm wondering if you ever had to explain your identity or how to prove that your distance is valid for them to see you as like another, you know?

15:27

Maya

Yeah. I mean, as far as that goes on, like the proving myself point, I'm not really interested in doing that. And, and I'm securing my humanity. I'm securing myself in that way. Like I, I know why I'm the night and I deserve all these things and I don't necessarily seek to be understood by cisgender people, which is interesting because it can also be really, really painful to not be understood by cisgender people.

16:00

Maya

It just is painful. And I don't have a desire to make my identity like something that can be explained necessarily. Again, like it's this really weird. Like I wish you would just get it, you know? I wish I could just talk to someone and they would get it. And it's also like, I don't want to make it easy on you.

16:20

Maya

Like, understand and because like, that, that wouldn't be me. So I haven't really had to defend myself to somebody in real life. But explaining myself, I have to do a lot. It's frustrating. Comes like when you're at the doctor's office, when you have like questionnaires that you fill out? When I do, like if I do like a research study, it's like, okay, like, you know, they ask for categories.

16:43

Maya

I'm like, okay, my sexuality is lesbian, but like, my gender is also, yeah, like transmasculine, but also like there's lesbian in there. And I don't know how to tell you that and it feels weird and just even explaining to really well-meaning, like loving cis people and even other trans people to some extent, like it's just like exhausting. It's like, I don't know how to do this.

17:01

Maya

I still don't really understand myself. And it can be really difficult and frustrating to know this cis person and this is people I found who I like the most are people who are like, That's awesome. Moving on. You know? They're like, Yeah, whatever you need. That's cool. Yeah, I don't. Giving people a label helps. Like I'm Transmasculine Yeah, like I'm a lesbian. They're like, okay, likes Girls is a guy, you know, it gets them somewhere. But it's it's exhausting to try and tell so many of the intricacies. Something I don't fully understand. Yeah.

17:40

Alex

Yeah. And they can never really understand if they don't go through it.

Maya

Yeah, like there are cis people who do really understand things, but they never quite fully get it. And that always kind of always kind of stings. And I find that even within the trans community as

well, I found a lot more solace in like trans feminine people and, you know, just talking to them or just listening to them about my gender and being like, well, like, okay, you do actually kind of get it in a way that I don't necessarily feel that I've gotten before from other Transmasculine people. You just gotta find your community.

18:20

Alex

What do you wish cis people would do for the trans community more?

Maya

I wish they'd shut up.

Alex

Can use a phrase that in a sentence?

18:39

Maya

Yes, I wish cis people would stop talking so much about things they don't understand, I wish that they'd stop talking about hormones and surgeries and bathrooms and all that because they don't understand those things. And I wish they'd listen and I wish they'd accept that like there are going to be people who you just don't understand or you think are weird or who you think are like, freaky and that like, that's okay and that you can live with them.

19:13

Maya

I think this is people in my life that I tolerate the most, or cis people who are either a little freak themselves or like, get it or like, yeah, like this is cool as hell like do whatever you want. You know that there are people who are secure in their cisness to a point where they can just feel totally comfortable around everyone else because they're not like trying to prove themselves constantly.

19:37

Maya

I wish people would become more secure in themselves, like cis people, and I wish them like, I don't know, like learn about us and learn about all the weird ways that you can be human and all the weird freaky, gross, sexy, whatever ways to be a human and, like, get comfortable with themselves after all that. Because I think that would a lot. And I also just really wish they would stop talking over us.

20:01

Alex

Yeah. And its also to be secure in your identity is also to persist.

Maya

Yeah. No, they're a lot of cis people are really insecure with themselves because they've never interrogated their identities because they don't think they have to. And so you get a lot of really insecure cis people who take it out on other people. And that's not saying like a lot of cis people are secretly trans. A lot of cis people are cis but aren't comfortable with themselves.

20:28

Alex

And that usually still means like violence.

Maya

Violence. Transphobia, Yeah, like, you know, surgeries, hormones, this, that and the other. They can't imagine being comfortable within themselves because they're not comfortable within themselves. So they haven't taken the hard journey of like doing introspection and becoming comfortable. So they think that any trans person who's seeking surgery or hormones or blockers is as uncomfortable as they are and as on the edge as they are.

Alex

Yeah, that's that's actually really true. And now I want to talk about some of the anti trans legislation.

Maya

Yeah.

21:07

Alex

Just you don't have to go in detail because. Yeah, but like can you talk about how that works, because a lot of people don't even know it's happening already, but can you talk about how laws that are against trans people or drag will affect younger trans people and people who aren't out yet. Yeah, yeah. The affect of the community.

21:29

Maya

Yeah. I mean laws that are designed to target any member of the community is going to affect, first of all, like other members of that community, any young gay man who's like, fuck, like I wanted to do drag and like to say it's over. It's illegal now. Like that's going to keep him in the closet or keep him from doing drag.

21:51

Maya

It's going to affect a lot of young trans. I know I talk to young trans people who are like, I'm not going to come out because I just I can't do all that right now. Like, it's terrifying. There's this girl and I keep telling her, like, you just you got to start like, you know, hormones, you got to help yourself.

22:05

Maya

And she's like, I'm scared. And it's because of all these things and it's really killing kids and it's killing adults. It's like it's really horrendously depressing. At minimum, you know, a lot of these bans and bills are based in like a lot of trans misogyny. That's really the thing with the drag bans. It's not about gay men. It's about it's about trans misogyny.

22:26

Maya

It's got to do with hatred of trans women. But these I mean, like, it affects everyone. I'm not affected by trans misogyny. I live in California, but like, thinking about these things makes me sick. It makes me scared to travel outside the state, it makes me scared to interact with people, you know, like as I continue, like with testosterone and approaching in like a little bit of gray area where it's like where cis people are kind of like, what going on over there and like can make it a little uncomfortable.

22:58

Maya

It can make it a little scary. And I just really worry about younger people and just like seeing that and seeing how it is and deciding like, I can't handle that. I need to stay in the closet, I can't come out. I don't want to come out until I've like moved away from everyone. I think these bills are going to hurt a lot of people.

23:18

Maya

I think the slight positive that these bills have had, if you can look at that as like really reminding like queer and trans people to like arm ourselves and protect ourselves, I think that's been a necessary movement that these bills are, I guess, bringing back to the fore.

23:37

Alex

Yeah. Kind of a call to action?

Maya

Kind of. I mean, I think that I think a lot of us need to be behind guns themselves and I think that these bills have been sort of helping people get comfortable with guns as a form of protection against against violence and have been sort of helping break a little bit of the guns. Bad aura that we have in our heads in the left.

24:08

Maya

I think that they do they can help a lot of people. And that's the slight positive that I'm really like scraping out of these bills. But I think that the bills are just really horrible for the mental health of millions of kids and adults. Yeah.

Alex

Yeah. And that was really interesting what you said about guns like protecting themselves. That reminded me of like, the Black Panthers.

Maya

Yes.

24:34

Alex

I learned about it in history. Can you just talk about how, like, the misconception that people have, especially like liberals and stuff about guns, and then you tie that back to the trans community.

Maya

Yeah, yeah. So I guess I could preface this by saying when I was in high school, I led the like March for Our Lives or whatever, like walk out in the wake of... I don't even remember it. Their like color was orange, Marjory Stoneman Douglas or something. There was a school shooting. It was a big bad school shooting.

25:08

Maya

And I led the walkout. I was very anti-gun. I still have posters that I made but I'm I'm not very pro-gun and that is a direct result of of craziness and of talking to a lot of trans feminine people, especially, who are most likely to be, like, assaulted on the street talking to them made me realize, like, first of all, all anti-gun stuff like is really deeply, fundamentally rooted in racism.

25:36

Maya

I wrote a very long paper about this. And it's not it's not rootion and it's not about protecting people. It's about protecting white people from the start. Like the Mulford Act was done in direct response to the Black Panthers showing up with guns and like policing, police. We've been banning guns to protect white people for a very long time, not to protect safety.

26:01

Maya

And as you can see, that doesn't work. Banning guns is not slowing down the rate of school shootings, but the ability to have a firearm or have a community who's trained with firearms is invaluable to people who are visibly queer and who have to walk around in dangerous communities. I think that we need to get comfortable with violence again, and we need to get comfortable with using guns to protect ourselves and protect people we love.

26:30

Maya

They're not for everyone. Guns are fucking scary. Shoot. They're they're really loud. They're terrifying. They kill people. But as we deal with this, like, wave of anti-trans and queer legislation and hate and violence, we need to get comfortable with using using that to protect ourselves and protect people we love. And I think that the queer and trans community is slowly starting to come around to that and understand that, that sometimes it takes a gun to keep yourself safe. Yeah, I hope that we get comfortable with that. I talk about that for too long.

27:15

Alex

Yeah, that's great. I mean, it's you said it was really important for people who are visibly trans. So can you tell everyone the dangers of being, like, not passing or something?

Maya

Yeah. So there's, you know, the whole the concept of passing is complicated. Passing very generally basically means that you appear cisgender or normal. There are set up cis gender, so you are a trans person for maybe who appears to be cis gender, or you are a gay person who in whatever way is not visibly gay. You can't be identified, can't be clocked as some sort of queer.

28:03

Maya

A lot of people will never, may, never want to be, may never want to pass. But for a lot of people, just not what they want. I don't want that you know, like and a lot of people just cannot ever pass. That's just how it is for any variety of reasons. So being unable to pass or being unwilling to pass or for whatever reason, being identifiable as queer, even like a cis gay man who walks a little funny can be, you know, clock, night on fight of some sort of queer.

28:32

Maya

That's dangerous because then you can be identified as a target. You can be identified for harassment very quickly. If someone's in a bad mood walking down the street and they see somebody who looks kind of fruity, you know, it's like, perfect, I'm going to jump this person. I'm going to f them up like, I hate trans people, I hate gay people, whatever.

28:53

Maya

It's dangerous to walk around and be identifiable as a queer person. Some people don't want to escape that. Some people can't escape that. Or I guess escape isn't the right word. Some people, you know, some people want to be identifiable as queer. Some people can't. Pass.

29:13

Maya

And they're in quite a bit of danger. And that affects a lot of people. Affects you know, you can look for people and you can identify them. Trans people do this to each other. We look like, Oh

shit. Like I thought, I think that guy was like, I think like that guy was trans, you know, But somebody else can do that to you too. So you're in danger if you look like that.

29:34

Alex

Yeah, it affects more people. Affects different people more than others. I'll let you talk about that.

Maya

Okay. Yeah. I mean, so trans women again, have a really hard time with trans misogyny. People are more on alert for them for whatever reason. This isn't to say that they like. You know how like Transphobes are? Like, we can always tell because they can't. You can't always tell. But, you know, if you want to look for something, you can look for it. Trans women we have a harder time passing in their transition. Like early on in their transition trans men, trans masculine people like also have a harder time passing as cisgender men but they're not they're not in the same kind of danger if a trans woman who doesn't pass is more likely to be like physically assaulted, a trans man who doesn't pass, more likely to be verbally assaulted, both of which are horrendous and traumatic and awful and suck.

30:33

Maya

But there are just there are like explosive differences in the kind of dangers that people face and black queer people, black trans people face the intersections of racism as well as homophobia, transphobia. So they're at increased risk of violence. Latino people, and especially like trans women just across all categories, are at really high risk for physical assault. Yeah, and even just like fems, as gay men got hit, pretty often it sucks and understanding where your position of like privilege is a necessarily can.

31:15

Maya

It's painful to be like, you know, like, oh, okay, I'm not like winning the oppression Olympics or whatever, but it can also be like empowering because it's like, okay, like if something happens, I can do something and it's necessary.

31:30

Alex

Yeah. Okay. Thank you. I think that's all I wanted to talk about. I think that was all really good. I just want to know if you have any. Okay, well, let's do the conclusion. First of all, what do you want cis people to do in terms of trying to be a better ally?

32:09

Maya

Yeah, I mean, I want cis people to sit down and and not talk over trans people and get comfortable with themselves. I want people to get uncomfortable with themselves and get comfortable with themselves. And I want people to just unconditionally support trans people

because we know what's best for ourselves, you know, And I just want cis people to be chill and get comfortable with the fact that they're going to be people around them who make them uncomfortable.

32:40

Maya

That's just how it is being a person. And they don't have any right to destroy a person's life like that, to deny them medical care because it makes them uncomfortable. I just wish they would listen to us because there are a lot of CIS allies who do that and are like really valuable to the trans community and are safe and are trusted.

33:03

Alex

Okay, well, you already talked about the whole cis thing, but now I want to I want to know, like, what's your advice for younger trans people, maybe especially in the Bay Area, who are looking for a community?

33:27

Maya

Yeah. Okay. Don't do drugs. Stop doing drugs, please. That is a really big one. A lot of really young people seeking community are doing drugs. Stop vaping, please. It's going to hurt you. I'm like, Legalize everything per that's on the other foot. Oh, my God. Nicotine, stop. Stop drinking. It's hurting you. If you want to seek community, go to all these places where you can do that and don't do that.

33:58

Maya

Less alarms. Yeah. Go to Oakland, go to SF, go to the DNA lounge. It's an 18 plus bar. It's very like entry level whatever. But it's fun. And there are other people there in real life and I feel like that's really important. Go to drag shows, go to Pride, pride sucks and is super corporate, but go to pride.

34:23

Maya

Go look at people having a great time. Go look people with their cocks out. Do that. It's good for you. Talk to your friends in real life. Get outside like, I mean, like talk to trans women who are older than you because they get it like their. Yeah, they get it. And there are just so many, like older queer people in the Bay Area that you can talk to go volunteer like food not bombs does stuff in NorCal resists.

34:59

Maya

There are all sorts of like mutual aid organizations that because their mutual aid organizations are like full of queer people, go volunteer for those. It makes you feel so good to just give people

things and like help and you get to talk to other queer people and it is infinitely better for you than Instagram or TikTok or Tumblr.

35:18

Maya

Like you found a community there. That's great, but you got to go talk to people outside. It will help you so much. I think that's just my big thing. Like the Bay Area is still like full of queer and trans life and you don't have to be 21 to go get it. Just go volunteer somewhere, Go walk down to Castro.

35:36

Maya

It helps a lot. It's really good for you. And it it is uncomfortable sometimes, but like, just go outside, touch grass and go take advantage of like everything that we have in the Bay Area. Still like the queer community that we have left. And the best way to do that, I would say, is to volunteer to mutual aid stuff because yeah, and stop doing drugs. Stop drinking.

36:03

Alex

So mutual aid is tied with like being queer and trans?

Maya

It's so deeply like, yeah, I mean, a lot of the people who volunteer are some form of queer trans because they know better than everyone that we need mutual aid and we need it in all sorts of forms. So yeah, like food, not bombs, makes food. There's nothing inherently like gay about that. Okay, we're named QUICC, Queers United in Community Care whatever that's you'd expect to find queer people there but food, not bombs.

36:31

Maya

It's like bunch of like old guys, you know, like 67 year olds who like hippies and then it's like a bunch of, like, blue haired, queer kids and it's awesome. And that's where you find, like, real life community is these like, volunteer groups. And it's just so healing. Really. Yeah.

36:50

Alex

All right. That was great. Can you sum it all up in, like, one sentence on, like, what you should do?

36:57

Maya

Yeah. Okay. If you're a queer or trans kid in the Bay Area, you should volunteer with mutual aid groups, and you should take advantage of Oakland and San Francisco's queer and trans scene.

You can get there under 21 too. But yeah, really do your best to talk to people in real life who are older than you and who are queer, it's good for you.

37:22

Alex

That's actually like this isn't a part of interview, but I actually use you because there's a lot of hate towards older queer people.

Maya

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Ageism and all that stuff.

Alex

People who live through more than you.

Maya

Yeah.

Alex

More than you probably ever will.

37:38

Maya

Yeah. Yeah. Go see a drag show. You did that. Amazing. More kids should see drag shows they're awesome.

Alex

Yeah. Okay. And then for the last thing, anything you want, anything we don't talk about that you want people to know about being trans in the Bay Area.

Maya

I mean, being trans in the Bay Area, that's better than it is in other places. Yeah, it's better than it is in other places. It's still really hard. It's still you still face harassment and discrimination. But there are people here. You're if you're queer trans here, like take advantage of that. There is a community here and there are people here who are really strong.

38:26

Maya

And who have been here for a really long time and who want nothing more than to see other younger, queer trans people become part of the community and become strong and like help other people. Everything sucks a lot, but they're like the Bay is a really, really good place to be queer in terms of community, and you should make active efforts to seek that out. It really helps.

Alex

Okay, I think that's great.

Maya  
Cool.