

QYLA 25th Anniversary Announcement

This year we are proud to announce the **25th Annual Queer Youth Leadership Awards** on Saturday, May 14, 2022, in-person at Watsonville High School.

In the past 25 years we have seen profound progress for the LGBTQIA+ community, both here in Santa Cruz County and around the country.

We have seen our event grow in size and change locations, starting off in modest venues like Hobbes Restaurant in Santa Cruz and the YWCA in Watsonville, later moving to venues like the Coconut Grove, and finally to being hosted by K-12 schools and their LGBTQIA+ clubs throughout the County. For the past two years we even went virtual to keep us all connected together safely during the ongoing pandemic.

For 25 years we have seen our LGBTQIA+ youth take on leadership roles in their schools, their places of worship, their sports teams, and in their communities. We have seen underrepresented identities like our nonbinary and asexual communities gain larger voices and more visibility. And we have seen both youth and adult allies rally around our LGBTQIA+ youth and fight for changes in their workplaces and institutions because we know it takes a whole community to empower the next generation of leaders to grow into themselves in a place where they are affirmed and celebrated.

QYLA has been many things to many people. QYLA is about gathering as a community, bearing witness, visibility, celebration, raucous applause, and, above all, an outpouring of love. We thank our trailblazers for helping us get as far as we are today, and as we look to the future, we know there is still so much more to be done. We will work to continue inspiring youth leaders, allies, and organizations to create positive change for the LGBTQIA+ community for the next 25 years and beyond. We look forward to celebrating with you on May 14, 2022, at 6:00pm at the Quad in the heart of campus, Watsonville High School.

From your friends at the Queer Youth Task Force of Santa Cruz County
QYLA.org

**QUEER
YOUTH
LEADERSHIP** awards