



MARCH 10, 2016

# BiNet Santa Cruz

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CA - We are proud to announce the launch of **BiNet Santa Cruz**, a new grassroots community organization specifically aimed at providing a voice on behalf of and organizational vehicle for the bi+ community (1) in Santa Cruz County.

**BiNet Santa Cruz** is to be a local affiliate of the national **BiNet USA** organization, at the invitation of Faith Cheltenham, BiNet USA President. An affiliation with the national BiNet USA organization will provide us with a vehicle for formally accepting tax deductible donations and making expenditures in a manner transparently accountable to our donors and community.

Our founding steering committee consists of longtime out and proud bi+ community organizers Chai Bryce and Thomas Leavitt, who are joined by: Emilio Barajas, founding President of Pajaro Valley Pride and a newly emerging leader in both the bi and larger Santa Cruz County queer community; and Alina Hammer, longtime local community activist, most recently involved with Compassion and Choices and their effort to make the End Of Life Options Act law in California.

We fully expect this list to grow as we do outreach and expand awareness of our efforts. Our initial goals are to facilitate a loud and visible bi+ presence at the Kresge, Santa Cruz, and Pajaro Valley Pride celebrations and marches, provide financial support for a vibrant online social media presence (including the an active Bisexual MeetUp Group and a web site to be launched at a future date), and serve as a vehicle for gathering sponsorships to cover meeting room costs at various venues as well as support a presence at bi+ community events and bring speakers and other individuals relevant to the bi+ community to Santa Cruz.

We also intend to engage in a dialogue with local community institutions about how to most effectively serve the bi+ community, which recent surveys indicate include anywhere from a quarter to 40% of millennials and younger folks (2,3). Individuals who fall under the bi+ umbrella face severe disparities in health and other services (4), a problem which is only compounded by the fact that disproportionately large numbers of transgender and queer people of color self-identify as bi+, according to a Human Rights Campaign brief prepared in conjunction with BiNet USA and other regional bi organizations:

*"...transgender people and people of color comprise large portions of the bisexual community – with more than 40 percent of LGBT people of color identifying as bisexual, and about half of transgender people describing their sexual orientation as bisexual or queer — making these groups vulnerable to further disparities that occur at the intersections of biphobia, racism and transphobia."*

**Please contact Thomas Leavitt for more information 831-295-3917**

**Santa Cruz BiFriendly on Facebook**  
**<https://www.facebook.com/santacruzbis>**

**Santa Cruz BiFriendly Meet-up**  
**<http://www.meetup.com/Santa-Cruz-County-BiFriendly-Meetup/>**

(1) Bi+ is the umbrella term used by the bisexual/pansexual/fluid activists nationwide to incorporate all sexual minority identities that do not adhere to the monosexual gender binary.

(2) "1 in 2 young people say they are not 100% heterosexual" <https://yougov.co.uk/news/2015/08/16/half-young-not-heterosexual/>

(3) "A third of young Americans say they aren't 100% heterosexual" <https://today.yougov.com/news/2015/08/20/third-young-americans-exclusively-heterosexual/>

(4) "Health Disparities Among Bisexual People" <http://www.hrc.org/resources/health-disparities-among-bisexual-people>