

Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors Proclamation

HONORING ENALAYAH RIVERA NEESE

WHEREAS, the mission of the Queer Youth Leadership Awards is to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ youth in our community by increasing positive awareness of queer youth leadership and increasing safe and welcoming environments at home, at school, and in the community; and

WHEREAS, the Queer Youth Leadership Award is given annually to queer youth who are 12 to 18 years of age to acknowledge their accomplishments and the contributions they have made to their communities, whether in their homes, schools, religious institutions, athletic or academic teams, or other social groups; and

WHEREAS, Enalayah Rivera Neese is a strong and resilient woman of color who stands as a powerful advocate for justice, working tirelessly to uplift both herself and her community; and

WHEREAS, as a leader in Delta's Charter High School's Queer Straight Alliance (QSA), Enalayah creates meeting agendas and facilitates inclusive group discussions, ensuring that all members feel safe, supported, and heard; and

WHEREAS, Enalayah also spearheaded a wide-reaching community service project through their leadership class at Delta, supporting Santa Cruz's unhoused population through fundraising, resource drives, and a partnership with Food Not Bombs to distribute supplies; and

WHEREAS, in response to growing threats toward LGBTQ+ and undocumented youth, Enalayah advocated for stronger protections by urging school leadership and the board to safeguard student privacy and develop clear protocols in the event of an ICE presence on campus; and

WHEREAS, beyond their activism, Enalayah is a creative force who expresses herself through original poetry, is composing a coming-of-age memoir, and is conducting research on the impact of substance use on teen mental health; and

WHEREAS, Enalayah's vision, compassion, and bold leadership have made a lasting impact on their school and community, inspiring others to speak up, act with empathy, and strive for meaningful change.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Felipe Hernandez, Chair of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, hereby honor and recognize Enalayah Rivera Neese as a recipient of the 2025 Queer Youth Leadership Award.




Chairperson, Board of Supervisors

May 10, 2025

Date