

Kanoa Arteaga, a Transgender Activist and Leader

Kanoa Arteaga is a transgender leader and activist and has worked with many LGBTQIA+ non-profits and is currently working with a non-profit organization called Trans Lifeline. Trans Lifeline is a hotline which helps transgender people in crisis with mental health. Kanoa currently works as a micro-grant manager at the organization. He specializes in helping trans individuals change information such as names and gender identity on their legal documents which can be very difficult to navigate without guidance.

Kanoa first started doing most of his work around here in the Bay Area but now he usually does his work in Austin, Texas where he lives now. Kanoa talked about how he first started doing work as a trans leader around ten years ago by doing community organizing.

“I have this history of when I see problems happening in my community I sort of take it upon myself to really just get out there and do something about it.”

He started an organization called Queer Cumbia in the Bay Area. Queer Cumbia raised money for people in the queer community who needed it, by throwing house parties and other events. When he moved to Austin, Texas he saw that queer and transgender people there needed a safe space to talk about the issues going on in their communities and talk to one another.

“Now where a lot of my work usually lives is in talking to folks who are trans masculine, identify as a man, or just under the masculine umbrella about how to be better men” Kanoa said. “I think for me as a trans person there was always this constant battle between being recognized as a ‘real man’ but also having some valid internal conflict about what that actually meant”

Kanoa talked about how nowadays the idea of being a “real man” is mostly associated with demeaning women or being homophobic and transphobic and Kanoa tries to stop that. Kanoa has a website called *Abundant Masculinities* where he posts advice for not having toxic masculinity.

Interviewing Kanoa was really amazing and I felt like, as a trans individual, I could relate to some of his experiences. It was really inspiring to hear Kanoa's story and I hope to maybe chat with Kanoa again sometime in the future.