

LGBTQ+ Community of Monterey County Project

The Reminiscences of

Kylee Hawthorne

HCOM 350s: Oral History and Community Memory SL

California State University, Monterey Bay

2020

Preface

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Kylee Hawthorne, conducted by Giselle Monterrosas on April 14, 2020. This interview is part of the LGBTQ+ Community of Monterey County Project.

The reader is asked to bear in mind that she/he/they is/are reading a verbatim transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

Zoom

Session One

Interviewee: Kylee Hawthorne

Location: Orange County, CA

Interviewer: Giselle Monterrosas

Date: April 14, 2020

00:00:03.120

Q: Okay, so today is April 14 2020 and this is Giselle Monterrosas. I am in my home in Orange County, California and I am interviewing Kylie Hawthorne, who is a middle school teacher and Chair of Education and Outreach for the Monterey Peninsula Pride Board and she is located in Monterey, California, is that correct?

00:00:29.190

Kylee Hawthorne: Yeah, that's--I live in Monterey permanently. Right now I'm down in Orange County as well, but I live in Monterey.

00:00:38.010

Q: Yeah. Cool. So--and we are doing this recording through ZOOM. So, thank you so much Kylie for doing this interview with me.

Alright. So, uh, to begin, um, tell us who Kylie Hawthorne is.

00:00:54.900

Kylee Hawthorne: Ooo that's a good one. Hm, okay, so I guess I'll-- you already said I teach middle school. Um, I'm 28 years old. Um, I am a passionate person, is the word I use when someone says to describe yourself, passionate, one of them. Um, I do-- recently I've been getting

really involved in different volunteer organizations. Um, I really enjoy working with youth and, um, you know, kids in middle school, high school age that are struggling with, whatever, life I guess. I really-- for some reason I've always been drawn to that, like in my adult life. It's always what I wanted to do. Um, I enjoy exercising and like doing physical things that-- was training for a half marathon recently, but then broke my toe in like a week before and it was not exciting.

[laughs] Yeah. [Pauses] Gosh, I am the oldest of four children. I feel like that's a pretty like determining thing of who I am, like the older I get, the more I realized that being, like, in that order with my siblings is like, done a lot with like my identity and like, who I am and like, i don't think i realized that until pretty like, later on in life. Um, gosh, should I, should I keep going?

00:02:30.180

Q: Yeah, go on! This is your story. Go ahead [laughs]

00:02:35.250

Kylee Hawthorne: Gosh, you know, I-- what else can I say. I-- vitamin D and the sun is like a huge like positive-- has a very big positive impact on my mental health, for sure. I struggled when moving to the bay, with it being like overcast and like kind of raining all the time. Or like, that's what I feel like from coming from Orange County where it's like never rains and super sunny. Um, so I try and get in the sun, whenever I can. Um, gosh, always considered myself like *a math person* or like a lot like, you know, that what right or left side of the brain, not the other one. Um, but I'm trying, within the last couple years, to use more of the other side of my brain because, again, I think that was something that I like told when I was younger and then just harped on to that was like “oh yeah like I'm a math person like my dad.” And then like, you

know, that just like, meant kind of like artistic thing was not part of the plan for me. My plan.

Um, [pauses] I'm an introvert, which I recently figured out that that means that I process more on my own, right? Like I'm still like super social and like around people, but like when I need to like decompress like I have to do that like by myself. Um, yeah, I don't know, maybe [laughs] it's good for now?

00:04:11.970

Q: Yeah! It's perfect. It's perfect. We're gonna go more in depth about everything that you just said, actually. So, yeah, thank you. So, since you told us, now, who you are in your perspective, can you tell us, like how you came to be, like, for example, where were you born and who was with you during your childhood.

00:04:31.980

Kylee Hawthorne: Yeah, so I was born, like I said, I was the oldest of four. My parents were both born and raised in South Africa. My whole extended family is there, all my aunts, uncles, grandparents. Um, but they moved-- they met there, went to college there, got married there, and then they moved here like before starting a family type of thing. Um, I lived on the east coast for a little bit. Born in California, moved to the east coast, but then ended up coming back here in like third grade. Um, I-- yeah like definitely struggled quite a bit in school. For a long time, had like a lot of energy and was like very impulsive and like loud and like [pauses] I like curious and like interested in everything. But that, you know, I guess, like in the 90s like that was-- and even now, it's like, it's still hard, I think, to, like, you know, I have some of my students that act like I did. And it frustrates even though, like, I know, you know, I expected people to not get

frustrated. But yeah, so I struggled quite a bit with not getting in trouble when I was younger and then I-- like definitely, it like really like hurt me because I wasn't trying to do anything wrong. You know what I mean? It was just like, I had a lot of energy and I would like, get in trouble. And I'm like, "well, I'm just really curious about this one thing" and like, you know, trying to like express that. And then, you know, ended up being like, I guess a negative. Um, so it wasn't until I was like, so I just-- yeah, was kind of like a roller coaster through middle school and high school.

Um, and then it wasn't until I was like 20-21 like and I had gone through like a pretty rough patch that I just randomly, one day, it was like I decided to go about my journey in a different way. And I was just like, "I don't really like that my family like doesn't want anything to do with me" and that, you know, I'm just pushing against things so much. So then I sort of like started to take classes at community college and I was like, "oh wait, I kinda like this" and like remembered that I liked learning and was interested in that. And then, you know, I kind of thought, "oh, maybe that's a phase" or like it's kind of WAITING for the other shoe to drop and me to like go back to, like, you know, pushing against the grain and I still do. And some ways, but maybe not as self destructive of ways as it was younger. [pauses] Yeah.

00:07:18.060

Q: Yeah, okay.

00:07:19.260

Kylee Hawthorne: Is there-- Yeah. I mean, if you want me to go into more detail about any like part, you can ask. I don't know how long I should

00:07:25.740

Q: Yeah. Um, yeah. So, backtracking a little bit on your childhood, is there like a distinctive memory that pops up, um, during your childhood?

00:07:41.100

Kylee Hawthorne: Ooo, a distinct memory. [pauses] You know I hate that this is like, I don't like this is always the way that I go, but like whenever people ask questions like that, or I think about that, it's always like negative things that I think about or like come up with. Um, and like I said before, like just like getting in trouble a lot in school when I was younger, like really like [pauses] yeah, just like really like affected me, I guess. Like, you know, even as an adult now I'm still trying to like work through all that but-- So distinctive. I remember pulling tickets in school. So like-- if you would like, you know, like, shout out or something when you weren't supposed to do, it was like "oh, Kylee is yellow" and like putting like a little yellow tag next to your name. Right? And then just being like, "Oh". And then if you do something else like "oh, now you're on red" like that means you have you have to go to the principal and just being with like [grunts]. And I think it's because-- I was kind of talking about that earlier, that, when you ask that, that's kind of what popped into my head. Yeah. I do know that I went in a helicopter above the Grand Canyon, when I was like super small and I like-- that's my first memories.

00:08:50.730

Q: Oh okay, who did you go with? How, how was that experience for you?

00:08:55.050

Kylee Hawthorne: It was with my grandparents had come to visit and so it's my grandparents and then my parents and I was like super, super small like I think my mom was only pregnant with my sister who's two years younger than me so-

00:09:09.300

Q: Wow, that's amazing. I've never been to the Grand Canyon myself so I bet it was a beautiful sight to see.

00:09:15.930

Kylee Hawthorne: Yeah, definitely.

00:09:18.210

Q: Yeah, so, um-- Yeah so going back to school now. So how was school for you as a kid growing up? Since you already mentioned a little bit about elementary school, Let's jump in a little more to like middle school and then high school and then like go from there. So how was that experience for you?

00:09:37.530

Kylee Hawthorne: Um, I-- so in middle school-- I came here in third grade like elementary school was kind of-- I was still trying to like make friends and like fit in. But by the time I got to

my middle school, seventh and eighth grade, I had like a pretty good, or a big friend group, at least. I was definitely part of the popular crowd, but on like the outskirts of that, you know, like, the rebellious popular one that people were kind of like, I don't know, didn't exactly fit in. But I had lots of friends. And I was super like confident and loud and outgoing, but I definitely just [laughs] I guess like seeking trouble at any time that I could. I just, you know, doing the opposite of what I was supposed to do always just felt like the most appealing thing. And so, yeah, I spent a lot of time in seventh grade really giving my teachers a hard time and, you know, the minute I felt like, "oh, they didn't really like me" then I was like "game on - how can I irritate you even more since you already seem to be irritated." But school came easily to me. Like, I, without even trying, still was able to get good grades. Like a lot of my friends that were in the same stage of life or doing similar things-- I would just scribble a couple answers on a worksheet and turn it in, and then get full credit for it. Right? So I was able to keep good grades. So I had teachers that were like "we see potential in you, but you just can't seem to get it together." So that was kind of seventh grade. And then I had said-- in what I filled out-- So eighth grade, like two months into eighth grade, I was repeatedly getting into trouble and then got into quite a bit of trouble and was expelled from eighth grade. And that was, to this day, that's one of those big memories that I think about. But I've been...[sighs] since we have all this time now during the quarantine, I'm trying to do a lot of personal growth and reflection and self help stuff and I'm doing programs and one was asking about "go back to a monster memory that you have" and I just remember sitting in front of the Board of the District when they were deciding whether they're gonna expel me and they like, had my file and were asking questions and I couldn't defend myself or explain really what I wanted to. I just kind of shut down and then they were like *blah, blah, blah*.

And I just really remember that being like not good because then I was expelled from my district, and I couldn't-

So then to high school, like in ninth grade, I was still out of my district. So I couldn't start high school with my peers, which was also kind of rough. So then I had to go to a really small private Christian school. But then I was there for a couple months and [the district] were like "no, you can't come back." So again, I always-- when I talk about this or think this-- I always feel like it's negative memories, which is frustrating for me because I know I have awesome parents and life was "real privilege" and had this great life and all this opportunity, you know? But I didn't want that and I didn't like that. And I wanted to-- I was almost mad I had, you know, shit on a silver platter. Sorry, can I cuss? I don't know! [laughs] you know, I just rebelled against that idea in general. And so, it definitely - I'd went to the school for a couple months. Again, was expelled from there and then was homeschooled for a year - was able to go back to a public high school in 10th grade. And then I completed 10th grade at public high school with my peers. But again, was just ditching school whenever I could. Not really doing anything, um, constructive, I guess. And then eventually when I was a [unclear] and then got my-- what is it-- my GED like a few years later, but like I never ended up going back. So I just-- my entire school system really not a great thing for me and-- and the part that blows my mind is that I was-- I love learning and I was super interested and like, you know, wanted to just absorb everything and ask all these questions and, you know, it just-- the way that it was set up and [stutters] yeah it just-- it wasn't a good experience, I guess, in the end.

00:14:55.410

Q: Yeah. And like you mentioned before you-- like during this quarantine era right now that's happening, you've had time to like reflect and do some like self care stuff for your mental health. Now that you had time to think about all this and like reflect about your experience like during school, how do you feel about it now?

00:15:17.580

Kylee Hawthorne: I guess [sighs] I, I don't know if it like could have been any different, like, you know, people always talk about, like, if someone's not ready to listen or if someone's not ready to hear, like, it doesn't matter, kind of like what you tell them cuz like on my end I'm like "no one ever cared, no one ever helped me no one"-- and like maybe there were a bunch of people that care and we're trying to help me, I just didn't hear it, you know? Or I just didn't-- wasn't ready to like take it at that time. Um, but now you know there's some patterns that I see in myself like, that I'm repeating with my students that like, that aren't good, right? Like things that-- like I look back on and I'm like upset. They happen to me, and then I'll catch myself like doing something similar. And I'm like "Oh my gosh, like you should for sure no better", right? Um, but then it's also like made me really like try and like seek out and like support the students that I think, you know, like are struggling or need it the most. And like I've, you know, gone to bat with my like administration and fellow teachers when they're talking about, like, potentially, not inviting a student back or they don't want like use the word expelled, you know, but like, we don't want them anymore. And I'm just like we can't do that, right, like we need to do, like everything in our power to make them feel accepted like they want-- they're asking to be rejected because they think that they're going to be, like we need to do the opposite. And like, like-- other

than with kindness and love. Um, so I really have seen like both. Both ends of it, but yeah, I don't. It just, yeah. When I look back on it, I-- it's like confuses me a little bit because I'm just like, it-- yeah. I just wonder, like, why that's like a cycle that happens and like how it kind of happened so easily and like if things have changed and like if anything that I'm doing is different, or if I'm just like falling into the same, you know cycle and pattern that like my teachers did [pauses]-- but, yeah.

00:17:36.870

Q: Yeah. And could you describe, like maybe a little bit about the teachers that you had when you were in school?

00:17:45.270

Kylee Hawthorne: Yeah, um, I definitely-- the teachers that like-- the classes that I enjoyed were ones that had lots of structure and like very clear expectations that like never wavered, never change, right? It was like-- there were procedures and like routines and like that, you know, and that was just-- they were the same every day. And I think about like my high school math teachers, still to this day. And it was just like the same-- It was the same thing every day like, sat in the same seat like she-- this is what we're, you know-- she would do over the white-- or the projector-- like solve a couple problems and give us time and it's like-- I never even like made a peep or noise in that class or do that, you know-- it's just like, because it was just so clear, and it was like, you know, it felt easy for me to meet that expectation, um, because it was just super transparent and obvious to me like, you know? Then I think about like a different teacher, where it just seemed like was more like emotional and like reactive and like there wasn't as much like

concrete, set in stone. At least I couldn't like see them right where it seemed like maybe like sometimes people could do this and get away with that. But then other times people will do it and get like in trouble. And to me, it's like, oh, this is the same thing. So therefore I like, test out where that wall or where that boundary really is. Um so then I think, yeah, those, those were both 10th grade teachers that I'm thinking of. And I guess another like, negative thing that I remember about teachers is when they would like assume that I was doing or anyone was doing something that like didn't end up being true, right? Like, assuming that “oh, like, well, why are you doing that?” And it was just like “what? I literally was just like helping my friend with this problem.” I wasn't actually talking off task or, you know, whatever it is. And then just being like, SO offended and like, so hurt that like you-- “Why would you think that I was doing something wrong when I wasn't” right? Like, “what does it say about how you feel about me?” Um, and that really being like something that was harmful to my relationships with my teachers. And that's something that like I catch myself, like, making assumptions with my students. And I'm just like [gasps] like how-- you know, like, I mean we're human right? But it's like-- I was so upset when someone did it to me. And now, like in the moment, right? It's like something similar that I'm doing. And I'm just like, that's-- that's not-- that's super damaging, you know what I mean? Like that's not-- that's like telling the students that like, you expect less of the end than they're actually doing. Which is a horrible, you know, lesson. Um, yeah.

00:20:41.580

Q: Yeah. And was there a teacher that like perhaps, was a mentor to you? Or somebody that was a mentor to you during your high school days?

00:20:50.430

Kylee Hawthorne: During high school-- [pauses]

00:20:54.840

Giselle Monterrosas: Or middle school. Whenever [laughs]

00:20:56.820

Kylee Hawthorne: Yeah. What popped in my head was more of middle school-- wasn't a teacher, but a coach that-- it wasn't a sport through the school either though, but I just had like, like a family friend coach, um, that I'd known for, like, a few years. And he just-- again, this is something that has come up in my journaling self reflection stuff right now. So I'm like "oh!" [laughs] you know, I just kind of went over that! Um, but yeah, I had-- it was a soccer coach. And you know, I don't know what about him, like-- I felt like he showed like a special or like a particular like interest in me. I don't know if like he actually did or if that was just something that like he made everybody, you know, feel like he cared individually about them. Um, but I just, you know-- He never seemed like-- to be like, irritated or like annoyed of like things that I was doing. It was more like "I care about you. That's not a good choice, but I care about you" you know? Um, it wasn't like, you know-- I didn't feel like defined by my choices, which I think was something that happened, you know, in other instances. Um, so that's something like that I try

and like embody like as an adult now, right? Because it's like, we're all like learning and growing and it's not reacting like negatively or like irritated me later when someone doesn't like-- especially like, you know, someone in {unclear] isn't good for their growth. It's not like helping them get better. I know-- yeah, I would say-- yeah, but I would say that soccer coach is the most role model-ish.

00:22:46.830

Q: Yeah, yeah. And what about any friends that you had that like, you remember of? Through your experience at school?

00:22:58.350

Kylee Hawthorne: I'm [studders] so like my best friend-- most long term friend-- I met at like camp in like fifth grade. Um, and we went to middle school together, went to different high schools, we've-- since high school, we have lived far apart. Um, but we were really like super, super close. Maybe like teenage years, for sure. So, I definitely [unclear] my partner in crime. We call each other are maid of honors, even when we were like 12. So "MH" was what we call it for short. Um, and, you know, she's really [unclear]-- but she stayed my best friend for, like, you know, until today. Like later on in life, I've made friends and like new friendships. But I really feel like the closest most long term friendship is with her.

00:23:55.890

Q: Okay, anybody else that you possibly like were friends with that like impacted who you are today?

00:24:05.820

Kylee Hawthorne: Yeah, um, I also had my other like super-- my other best friend. We played on the same like-- not on the same team, but we played it on the same like soccer organization and our-- I get-- and he's, again, to this day, is like still my best friend. Um, but we didn't ever go to school together, but we would talk on the phone like, we call-- like I would call him like when with like these phones, right? With like-- call him at like after school like 3 pm, just on the phone for hours. And we wouldn't even be talking at times. You'd watch like full on TV shows, but like would just be on the phone at my ear. And I always felt like super, like, special that like, I had, you know, that friend. And he had his own group of friends and-- I don't know. I didn't really-- like, it meant a lot to me and to this day. We're still super close. He, like, you know, has gone on to do awesome-- like he's super successful. He went to law school. He's like a lawyer in San Francisco. He's engaged to another lawyer. They live like, you know, he's-- and we're, we're still super close-- still mostly talk on the phone [laughs] which is funny. But yeah, I mean, he definitely shaped like a lot-- or was just like someone that was like really important that they were there through like many stages of life, like a consistent support that I had which was really cool.

00:25:38.280

Q: Yeah, that's sweet. That's amazing. So, um, yeah. So now that we already touched a little bit about middle school and high school experience. And I know that like the high school experience is different for so many of us and-- compared to college. So was that the same case for you, like, how was college for you?

00:26:00.930

Kylee Hawthorne: Yeah, it was, it was completely different. I know I'd-- after high school-- so I stopped going in my junior year and then I had like maybe three or four year gap. And then I started taking classes at community college like pretty randomly. The friend that I spoke about earlier was taking a fashion class at the college and she was like "do with me!" and like that wasn't anything that interested me. And my boyfriend at the time was like-- I was dating a boy this time-- and he was like, "um, you should go like" [laughs] "yeah, I'd be great like that-- why would you not go?" and I was just like-- so like I hadn't considered that I would go back to school. Um, and then took this community college class with her and just like got SUPER into it. I think I like it because-- like I said, you know, schools come easy to me and it was like-- it was-- just felt really rewarding like, you know, going and then like, doing well on assignments and I was just like, I mean-- me and my friends still sat in the back of the classroom and just talk the entire time. Through the entire lecture. And the teacher would be like "Um. Girls. Like, you're being rude. Like, stop talking" like I was-- still like, did it. You know? Yeah, but so, then-- Community college years-- like took random-- after that one class, like, then the next semester I took two classes and then, you know, then the semester after that I took three classes. And then I was like "Oooo". Then my dad was like "what about transferring to this other college" and I was

just getting all this positive feedback from-- and this is also when I sort of made that big shift where I want to be more accepted in my family and wanted to get invited into events and stuff. And I got positive feedback from them because I was going-- taking these classes. And then, you know, got super excited about the idea of transferring and then yeah, applied to a couple schools--

And then I got into Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, which is like a really good school and like hard to get into. And I didn't even I didn't know that when I was like applying or anything. I just-- I thought it was like far enough away from Orange County that it would be like new. But it wasn't like too far, like in San Francisco, you know, that was like too-- I wanted like, you know, I wanted it to be a little bit closer. And then when I went there, I completely, like, was like teacher's pet, like, on it, like-- and not in the teacher's pet-- I think maybe isn't negative connotation-- but like, just was super conscientious. And like, just went to every class, I sat in the front, participated, rose my hand, loved, you know, and just like loved it. And I did Speech and Debate all throughout college, too. And that was something I started in Community College randomly. And ended up loving it.

And then, so that was like a big part of my college experience-- was traveling with the debate team and like I mean, I got to go all over the world with them, which was really cool and just really, I mean, I really, I-- in college, I think I got one-- not community college-- Cal Poly, I got one B the entire time. Otherwise, I got all A's. So I graduated, like that-- I think Magnum Kim Lata. And then sort of was super excited about that. Um, but yeah so-- And then I worked out of like a-- like an office setting for a year, but I didn't really enjoy it too much. So then I ended up

going back to school and then I went to UCSB and got my teaching credential and Masters in Education and yeah. Do you want me to go into any more detail about that?

00:30:00.060

Q: Yeah, it's okay tell as many as you-- as you want! But I was just gonna ask like, what made you decide on going to San Luis Obispo or UCSB, like you said?

00:30:11.460

Kylee Hawthorne: Um, so like I mean I ended up going to San Luis Obispo. I think because like the location. And then after I'd got in there like you know my dad was talking to people and they are all like, "oh, that's like an actual, like a really good school" you know, and then he was like "Kylee, everyone's saying that like, you know, that could be like a really good opportunity" and I was unsure, because they're like they were a Polytechnic school and I was doing, political science, so I was like that count? Like, should I go to that kind of school for that? They had a good political science program. So it was fine. Um, but yeah, I think I wanted to be like-- have a new area. Like a new space. Like a new like college experience. Like it really confused me knowing people that like went to college in our hometown. I'm like, "what? how do you want to like continue like living with your parents?" however you want to call it. Like it just-- that blew my mind. I mean, I live with my parents, but I still feel like I didn't understand that. I'm like "what?" we need to, like-- and it was, I mean it-- the social aspect of like moving away and like, you know, getting to form like my own identity was like-- all these different people that didn't know me, you know, from anything. I really think that enabled me to like, you know, be super

conscientious and like involved in school and like work super hard, because it was like a blank slate kind of thing. And I saw that as like an opportunity to really like, go for it.

And I do wonder like, you know, if I'd stayed in the same area with like, you know, the same people around me, as like influences, like if I would have felt so like empowered to sort of like switch up, you know-- because anybody that knew me would have never ever ever thought that like it was going to like, you know, try hard in school and like do well like care about that. And I think, you know, not having anyone tell me that and only having like positive feedback from like teachers and surrounding myself with people who like-- they do like a WOW program. So it's like "new transfer students all can," like, you know, "get together and make friends" and like the people I met the first day [unclear] through the entire college experience. And I don't know how I would have really met other people. I think as a transfer student, like trying to meet people in class would have been kind of hard. So they ended up being my friends, the whole time and they were, you know, also like hard working-- I don't want to use the word "good" but just like, I don't know, like most school mode, academically motivated. And it was those are just people I was around. So then that's just sort of what I did, without too much kind of thought into it. Oh my gosh, I definitely just went on a tangent. [laughs] So, and then I went to UCSB. I chose there because-- why did I?-- they-- I knew they had a good teaching program. And I knew, again, I didn't want to like be near my family like in Orange, like down south. I knew I wanted to still be away. Um, but, again, like a little bit too scared. I-- like going to San Francisco is always like a maybe, you know? But then it was just like a plane ride instead of a car ride home. Which now, I live in Monterey and I drive seven hours home all the time. That's fine. [laughs] But I think, then, it seemed like it would be a lot harder. A lot bigger of a deal. And then, so I applied-- I got

into UCSB and then I got-- and then the other-- and then-- I forget where else I applied, but then I also go into USC. But it was like super, super expensive and as like a grad student, you don't get like the same like financial aid options, I guess, as you do as an undergrad, because I thought I would be eligible for like financial aid more and they were like, "no, you can't, like, claim yourself" type of thing. And it was just like, "Okay, well that's seems really expensive". So then I went to Santa Barbara. Again, like, not knowing a single person but it's beautiful there, so, I was down.

00:34:39.300

Q: Nice. So would you say that your college experience was easy for you? Hard for you? Both? Where would you rate it?

00:34:49.170

Kylee Hawthorne: You know- [pauses] I think like academically [pauses] Gosh, I don't know. It's like, because-- what was being asked to do like was hard, and like was challenging. But it was also like, "what I wanted to do" type of thing. And it wasn't like-- Um-- was it easy or hard?-- I wouldn't say it was easy. I definitely think it's like, it's like the social like emotional just like life growth that happens, I think, was like so much and like kept getting thrown into that, like having to do that through school was definitely hard. But I think it was like, it would have been harder had I not, like, had things that I was like growing and like evolving. And like, I think if it-- If I was like not being challenged or not being like pushed or having like tasks or like

things to work towards, I think that would probably be harder.[pause] Yeah [pause] I don't know if that answers the question. That's hard! I don't know. I'm trying to think like easy/hard. Jeez. I don't-- I don't know. I just like life is hard, you know? No matter what, there's like challenges, but it wasn't anything like no like bad feelings, I guess. Compared to, like, you know, high school, middle school. Like, I think it was like all positive feelings.

00:36:30.360

Q: Good, yeah! And is there like something that stands out throughout your college years that you remember of? Like maybe some friendships or relationships or anything like that?

00:36:43.530

Kylee Hawthorne: Yeah. Earlier [unclear] Speech and Debate was like my jam. And that really became like what my experience was about because we had practice, like, you know, three, four times, traveled on the weekends. And Debate people are super cool because they're like, you know, nerdy and they liked like talk about, like, you know, like social issues and like politics and like have these like super deep engaging like conversations, which is awesome but then they're also down to like party and like have a time. And so I really kind of, found like a community with them. And so that really sticks out. I guess another-- I lived in a housing Co-Op when I went to Santa Barbara. So I had-- there was 19 people in one house and we [laughs] yeah and it was like a regular size house, with like a regular sized kitchen and we like communally like made food and like had chores and it was just-- honestly I think it was like sorority kind of thing. But like, not, you know? It was like, we had like house meetings once a week that lasted like four hours. And it was a vegan house too. So we would like debate whether egg should be

allowed or not. Like [laughs] you know, the sustainability debate lasted like two hours once a week. Which felt like, you know, kind of-- what I would talk to my friends about their sororities, That sounds just like my experience. Um, but that was a whole other like, you know, social experience. But yeah, like it just sticks out to me in a very like unique time in my life when I was there, I can't think of anything else that I can really compare to that.

00:38:26.280

Q: Okay, yeah. So, um, when-- so back in college when you got your Masters in Education-- is that correct?

00:38:34.500

Kylee Hawthorne: Mhm.

00:38:39.570

Q: Yeah. So when did you first know that you wanted to become a teacher?

00:38:41.610

Kylee Hawthorne: Um [pause] it was not-- It was never really my plan. My younger sister is a teacher and she always was going to be, um, from when she was like super young. And it was never really my plan. And then she went to-- did a teaching abroad program in Thailand. And it was when I was working in an office and I just did not like my job at all. And my family was like “Why don't you quit and go with your sister! That would be a super cool experience. I don't know why you are working in a shitty office. You know, do something else.” And then, I went with my sister there and we were there for five months and it was a super cool experience. But I just really, really, really liked working with the kids and felt really good about interacting with them. And it's interesting because I always had-- felt like I wanted to work with or, you know, support and help teenagers, like it was always something I liked to do and I just never ever thought of it in terms of being a teacher. So when I was there, I was like “I kind of like this” and then when I started looking into programs, I really didn't sort of have any kind of plan. And I'm like “whoa, I could go and get a teaching credential and a master's in education in a 13 month accelerated program and then I could have like a real job within like a year from now”, and I really didn't have like a-- I didn't know what else I wanted to do. I knew I wanted to go back to school. I mean, I definitely don't have one of those “I always wanted to be a teacher” type of things at all. It was more like-- there was practicality in it. Um, but then I-- yeah I just-- I really connected with the students. And I think I'd always been really like scared to interact with younger people. I didn't have younger cousins. I had siblings, but that was different. So I don't have any experience with kids and I was scared. And then when I was there, like being with them. I was like, “oh, this is actually not that scary and they're super cool” and “I like you better than adults”, so [laughs] why not?

00:41:02.400

Q: Yeah. And how was your journey in finding a job as a teacher?

00:41:07.980

Kylee Hawthorne: So that's what brought me to Monterey. Um, I-- in Santa Barbara, I got my credentials in social sciences. So it's like [unclear] middle school or high school age. And in Santa Barbara, my graduating class-- there was like 13 of us with the exact same credential. And there was no job openings in Santa Barbara for that position, and they're like-- everybody wanted to stay there and I was just like "I'm not gonna wait last minute and like duke it out with everybody and try and like compete for the one maybe job that happens". And so my good friend that I'd met in my teaching program, she-- her parents lived in Monterey and she got a job in Monterey Bay View Academy, which is a pretty small charter school. And then she was like talking about it and she was like, "Oh my gosh, like the school is amazing" like da-da-da. She's like "if they have a position, like opening like, for social science" like-- and it's pretty impacted too, for social science. I didn't realize that going into it. But like, out of all like English math, science, like there's a lot more or, at least, there were two years ago. There are a lot more openings for those jobs. Social sciences impacted. I guess they-- I was told multiple times that they save those positions for sports coaches [laughs] and I was like "What??" I just never had heard that. Um, and then-- so I applied and it was super early on in the application process. And so I did a couple of interviews and then-- when they offered me the job, I was just like "I'm just going to take this and start planning my life accordingly" instead of like, stressing and like

having to go through this process like, again. And I was down to move somewhere new, and some are different. And Monterey was beautiful, so-- and I want, I would like-- Steve, my friend-- And then we became roommates and what not. So, that's great.

00:43:04.710

Q: Yeah. And how did it feel when you receive the news that, like, you finally got that position for teaching?

00:43:12.180

Kylee Hawthorne: No, it was-- I was super excited. Um, I-- the-- my principal that had interviewed me-- I just thought was like the coolest person ever and I just have so much respect for her. And I was like “you are such a badass” like, I HAVE to learn from you. I have to, like, work with you. And like the way that she described the school and, you know, their beliefs and like what she was trying to do. It was just like “oh my gosh” like, I have to be there. I have to do that. And so-- yeah, I mean it seems like definitely like a “no brainer” when they offered me the job. And now, I mean it's two years. This is my second year there and it's like-- it really is like an awesome experience. And you know, I talked to my peers that graduated with me that were in like big public school setting or-- and I'm just like, “Oh, gosh. I think [laughs] I have it pretty sweet [laughs] based on their stories versus my experience. Um, so yeah, it was super exciting. And it's just you know when your student teaching you're doing like-- it's a lot of it is kind of

like-- I don't know-- didn't feel like your own classroom and like, your own students and like, your own curriculum and ideas and like, the minute that it was my own, you know, that-- I felt like I had, like, say, in it. I think that, like, was super exciting.

00:44:41.640

Q: Yeah, and could you tell me about your very first experience teaching?

00:44:49.980

Kylee Hawthorne: [laughs] Um, I-- I remember after the first day-- because I had done my student teaching. Um, but then I-- after my first, like actual day teaching, I remember like leaving and like, you know, telling my friend and being like “wait, these kids are super, super chatty” because in my student teaching, they were all kind of like-- much like, you know, kind of quieter and we're just like there wasn't as much like classroom management stuff going on. And then at my schoo--l it's a small school. They've all been together since kindergarten, for the most part, so they're all best friends. So just like a roomful-- already best friends, and then being like the new teacher that they know, you know? It-- I was just like “wow” this is-- Yeah, I was [fast noises] the whole time. And I was like, I don't really know how to deal with this. Like, I don't really know what to do. But, um-- so yeah. I think that was my, my biggest thing, was just realizing, like, “oh gosh, I have to beyond my game like all of the time” and like it was a little bit scary. And I just remember feeling like completely like, mentally and physically, just like

drained like it being like, three o'clock on the first day and just being like "I'm exhausted" like I am. But I mean like-- yeah, I mean I, yeah-- I look back at it as like a super like positive awesome thing and, like, just like the energy, and like excitement, and I don't know. I think their age is super cool too. So, yeah.

00:46:29.010

Q: Yeah. So, throughout your first experience teaching, are there, like, maybe any senses that remind you of your first moments teaching? Like, touch, smell or anything like that? That you can think of?

00:46:42.750

Kylee Hawthorne: Oooo that's a good one. I mean I can [laughs] definitely like-- as I'm like thinking now, like I can feel like-- they are, like, nervous like, kind of stomach feelings, right? And I've just been like [inhales] overwhelmed. Like," oh my gosh, this is scary." Um, I'm a sweat-er. So I was only sweating quite a bit-- when I get nervous, like a lot. Um [pause] okay, I'm trying to, like-- smell-- you know, everyone always [laughs] says middle schoolers smell when they like come in the classroom. And they're like [gasps] Like, I can never smell. [laughs] I can't smell them. I mean, I can smell but I think just being in there, you get used to it. Um, yeah. I mean, I just remember like hearing like all of their voices. You know, like um-- like all kind of like on top of one another just like "shhh" because they were super excited like coming back

from summer to share. I guess sounds would be chairs dragging on the ground [laughs] As I'm thinking now like that-- to this day, that's still a sound, I think, I associate with the classroom, um, Yeah, I think that's it.

00:48:04.260

Q: Okay. Um, teaching at a school like, was it what you expected it to be?

00:48:15.270

Kylee Hawthorne: Yes [pause] was it what I expected?-- You know, I don't think I expected it to be as, like, challenging as it is. Like, I think, you know-- I kind of thought, "oh, I'm the middle school whisperer." And like, you know, they're going to be able to tell that I love them and they're gonna like love me back, because they're going to know that I care about them. Like, I just sort of, like, had a lot of like assumptions, like, about that. But then, you know, it's a lot. It's very, like, emotionally, like intense, I think. For me, it's like, you know, having you like, on it, like, all the time and like, you know I can't have like, a bad day, or like a bad moment, right? Because there's just 30, you know, people watching like [gasps], you know? So I think I thought it would, like, come more naturally and I think I thought people-- like, me and the students would just like, you know-- if I was like, nice-- nice was like, my game plan, you know? Like I'm gonna be super nice, so they're going to be nice back. That's not how it works. You know? And it's so funny, because when I was talking to you earlier about like, the teachers that, like, I

like respected or like-- Right? Those are ones that have lots of structure and like, super clear expectations and like held it in like a high expectation, right? Like-- And that it was the opposite of my game plan COMPLETELY. I'm like "oh there-- we're just going to-- as things come up, we'll address them" like, "we don't need like, set in stone procedures or expectations" like, "we're all just going to be kind to one another" and like, um, yeah. So I think it-- it ended up being like a lot, a lot more challenging than I thought. And being a lot more, like, mental like psychological um,-- more so than I thought like-- right? It wasn't like about like, you know, "making this like really awesome worksheet." No, it's about like, trying to like, you know, model like, kindness and respect and like, integrity. Like, while also trying to hold high accountability and expectations and like, not accept like, you know, behavior that's not-- it's just, yeah. I mean, to me, it's all like, a big like, psychological game, more so than I expected. For sure. And I wonder if other people felt that way, too. Because like, you know, I didn't do like, child development or like, really like, any of that leading up to it. You know? So, I think there were a lot of like, assumptions that I had that like, were just completely incorrect. And like, I didn't know until I was like [laughs] standing in front of them [laughs] that I had some incorrect assumptions.

00:51:16.830

Q: Yeah, yeah. So, um, yeah, going along with that, how did you begin and like, being involved with the GSA club at your school?

00:51:28.410

Kylee Hawthorne: Oh my gosh! How did [pause] I'm trying-- So I think-- So this year-- the second year, I was teaching was the first-- they didn't have one the year before. So my school didn't have a GSA. And then-- I'm trying-- Oh my gosh! I'm trying to-- I can't remember if, like, a student had brought it up to me or if I-- I think I may have just been like, you know, we need-- like thought that was like [unclear] that we have. Like, my school doesn't really have any clubs or any like, extracurriculars-- well they have some extra-- but like, no clubs. Um, and so I think like-- I was like, "oh, that's something that I'm passionate about". And like "I wish that I'd had in school." Um, and so know, did some research and then talk to my principal about it and she was kind of like, "well, like this-- like the students would have to want that, right?" Like, you can't just be like, "I want this." And I'm like, that's a good point. Like, I don't know if there is a need for it. Um, and so she kind of was like, "why don't you do this and that and this and that" and like made it this like, very kind of like, daunting task that I was just like, "Oh my gosh. I don't know" because she was like, "we're going to get lots of parent push back" like this is going to happen, that's going to happen, like, "are you prepared for that?" And I was like a first year teacher, like [laughs] "Oh, maybe I'm not!", you know? "Maybe I'm not!" Um, but then I sort of like-- Oh gosh. I'm trying to [laughs] So I had like a couple students that were [unclear] and like, through, like, I don't know, I just knew. You know what I mean? I think just through friends or like overhearing conversations or whatever. And so I kind of like, planted a seed. Like, "if anybody wants a GSA club, I'd be the facilitator! If anyone's interested!" and then-- and that was first year teaching.

And then we came back. The next year, I had some students come up to me and be like, “do you still want to be the facilitator if we want to do a club?” and I was like [gasps] “Really?? Like, you want to do it?” And I was like, “Yes!” And then I felt like, more confident and like, more prepared and like-- that I had more time and like, energy to like, focus on it and then-- Again, it just-- it's still sort of-- you know, my principal will be like “okay, you know, okay-- you have to do x, y, & z first” And then I would do it. And then she'll be like, “Okay, well, now why don't you do this?” like, “okay, why don't you do that?” and then-- actually another teacher was like, “I feel like she's just throwing you bones to kind of” You know? Like, “I think you should just do it” So then in the end I just was like-- I, you know, looked up all the legal parts of it and-- Right? Like you,-- It can't be treated different than any other club. And like, there had been another teacher that started the baking club. And she just randomly had a Baking club one day. Like, students came. So I'm like, “she didn't have to get, like, approval” and like, if my-- if this, you know, has to be treated the same, then I don't think some sort of-- was like, “We're having the club here on this day” Like, here to hatch them into like villa-legality of it, type of thing. And, I think that's what my principal was looking for. Like, she wanted to see that I was prepared to like, follow through and like, fight for it. And like, you know, I think if I wasn't prepared to do that, then it wouldn't have-- like in her mind, it wouldn't have been successful. Because then, from the moment that that happened, like-- completely supportive! Like, all of it. Yeah.

00:55:08.610

Q: Okay, yeah. And what were some, like, rewarding moments that you had with your club?

00:55:16.770

Kylee Hawthorne: I- I really something that, like, at least felt like it was, like a when-- is the-- so, we are fifth through eighth grade. And they're like-- our fifth graders that have, like, befriended, like, the seventh and eighth graders, right? And like, I'll see them like interacting, like, in other spaces. Or like, I'm going to reach out to so and so. And I think that seemed really cool to me. And like, seems important that they were having like, um, you know, older students. There are other students who support them. Um, you know, I saw there'd be like a group of five students that would come one day and then, you know, like-- some of them would be upset. Like, "they're not queer!" [unclear] we're not doing, you know, who gets to come or not. And then, you know, the next day, like, you know, three of that group would come. And then the next day, two. The next day would just be, like, the one. And, you know, and I'm like, "oh, those were all of your friends, you know, coming in, supporting you, right? Because you didn't want to come by yourself"

And like I just-- seeing the students, you know, care for each other, like, that was so-- and then I have, you know-- which I think is so interesting, like-- most of the students that come to the club are like, struggling in other areas of school, which-- and it's like, I mean-- my principal loves the data on that, right? Because we do like-- it's not with-- like opportunity clubs. So, it's like, if you're behind on homework, like, you miss your elective, and like, you go to this opportunity class where you get help working on your homework. And like-- When I-- because I also did like, an elective for the club, and like, all my students would be in Opportunity in class. And it

was just like, “Okay, there's like a stat that seems super wrong” right? Like, if it's like just-- I don't know. So-- I don't really know where I'm going with that. But, and then just seeing like some of them really shine, and like, show interest and dedication on a certain project because it was connected to something LGBTQ and helping them figure out like, we do-- the eighth graders do like, a service learning project. It's like a year long project. And like, seeing students that like-- When they were in my class in seventh grade, like to even get them to write anything down or participate in the discussion was like pulling teeth. But then, you know, when it had to do with following LGBTQ storylines, and like, documenting those and writing and blogging about it was like, “oh my gosh!” Now, the students are working super hard, and doing all these amazing things. And like, showing all these leadership skills and wanting to teach lessons to the class or leading like, a circle on the discussion. And I'm like, “Oh my gosh! It's because they are identifying with that” and they're able to like-- they're actually interested with it, right? Because it's kind of like representing them. Um, I think that-- Yeah. So seeing students take on leadership roles and really go out of their comfort zone and, like, be confident, we're other wins. Yeah.

00:58:51.870

Q: That's amazing! And what about some-- maybe some difficulty that has been around with the club? Like in terms of the rest of the school or the community like as a whole?

00:59:07.710

Kylee Hawthorne: Yeah, there's-- I mean, I think-- Part like-- we, you know, had right when it first started happening, there was some, like, drawing on the stalls in the bathrooms. You know, like using the word "gay" like, "so and so is gay." You're like, you know, kind of-- and that wasn't-- or at least it wasn't like, I didn't know that it was happening before that, you know? So I think it was kind of like a push back-- I know we had posters like, pulled down. And kind of crumpled up that we're about the club. Um, I know that there are, you know, lots of conversations that were happening that were offensive to some students that I think was sparked by, like, this club, you know? So we'll have people walk by and look in the door, them like running away and like I'm, you know-- in my mind, if someone is showing that much interest in it, like, we should have a door open to them. You know what I mean? Like they don't just-- you don't just hate on that for no reason. So, you know, the push back with that and I-- and also like you know trying-- I know some of the people, a lot of the students in the club, are protective of the space and what we do, like, who's there and they really want it to go really well. Um, but we'll have quite a lot of students with really big personalities and like that really need a lot of support and like, attention. So kind of trying to figure out how to like, be a super open welcoming community. But again, trying to still hold, like, hold a level of what people that have to be safe, you know what I mean? So, it's like it was-- students come in there and like yelling or something that's getting other people feel unsafe, then it's like, Okay, so do we ask that student-- like, do we rejected them from the community because other members of the community aren't feeling safe with them? Or like-- how do we-- Right? And I don't-- that's not the answer, right? So then it's like, how do we, as a community, make sure that everyone's feeling safe and protected, while also like, including everyone? At least that was a big struggle and they're--

because they're, you know, fifth grade like to eighth grade. Like their development-- developmentally are very different. And so, I think-- I don't know-- just feeling not really confident in that. And I think it would be great further to be another adult there to, like-- for the most part, I'm only the adult in any of the club meetings and electives and stuff. Um, and I think that's upon reflection. Like next year, I think having more adults in the space is super important. So there's like a wider range of, you know, support there. For sure.

01:02:09.210

Q: Yeah, and with your club, is there maybe a particular student or students that you've worked with in the club that has impacted you or especially memorable or something?

01:02:24.360

Kylee Hawthorne: Yeah definitely. Um, and I--when I was speaking earlier, I was kind of referencing the student. But, I have one student and I had her in seventh grade. It was like-- And, not that completing your work is some determinant of anything, right? But, she didn't-- wouldn't really engage with anything. And like, struggled in all of her classes. And then, you know, she ended up being the one that was like, "can we do the GSA?" And like now, she, you know, is like taking all these fifth graders under her wing and it's like-- sends me like, "okay, here's this video with these discussions" and "I think we need to do this" and it's like, no-- sends resources and it's just like-- and you know, started a project where she was blogging on LGBTQ storylines

from different shows and like, she continued this blog now for almost two years. And it's like, an amazing thing. And like, so much, you know, she's doing all the ELA standards without really, you know, knowing it. But-- And so she, you know-- and just like, we didn't really talk too much, you know, when I first met her. And now it's just like, super, super, super chatty, and just has all these ideas and it's just super motivated and-- Yeah, she definitely, definitely sticks out. Yeah.

01:03:59.010

Q: So, would you say the GSA club impacted her a lot?

01:04:05.610

Kylee Hawthorne: Oh yeah, I think. I mean, I can only imagine what it's like. I mean, I just think of myself in middle school, right, and like if I had had this like I just feel like it would have been life changing. You know, like earth shattering, um-- I really do like-- yeah I mean, it's hard for me to say like, "Oh, I think it's because of the club. I think it's because of this" But just being-- so many of these-- so much more outgoing and playful and loud and just taking up space and being proud, you know what I mean? I just see that happening. And like, seeing them congregate small, you know, in other parts of the school and feeling like they have like a backing, you

know? Or like they have like support-- I think has been like really big for some of them and, yeah.

I know, I definitely think it's done a lot and it's just given them like, you know-- they're excited about it and motivated about it. And you have rainbow duct tape that they can get-- very small pieces, in small amounts, but like, you know, the amount of rainbow cut out of like a Nike that's stuck on their shoes or like on their bracelets. Now, you know, and they're all just going around school with it, so excited to show everyone. And I'm like, "That's so cool!"

And talking to their parents about it too. Like, a lot of them-- since the club, now-- were talking to their parents about it. And I think that's also huge, like, I don't know-- I don't know what they were doing before but, you know, I have plenty of parents now that they're out to, right? And are super excited about it. Saying that they talk to their parents about that. And I'm like," Oh my gosh, that is so cool!" Like, that in itself is, you know, life changing. So-

01:06:10.590

Q: Yeah. So, would you say that the GSA club was a success right now?

01:06:15.720

Kylee Hawthorne: Yeah. Oh yeah, I think-- Yeah, I don't know what the determinant of success is. But it's-- I mean, all, all good things. There hasn't really been like-- besides like, a couple

things. But, I think the overall attitude of it, is great. And like-- Yeah. I mean, it's ever evolving and changing and not, you know, at all what I think anyone expected all these different times. But, I think it's been great. And they all love it. And they love doing something that has to do with school, which I think is really important. They look forward to that. And like, are associating being accepted with school. And I think that's super important.

01:07:06.660

Q: Yeah, okay. That's amazing! Yeah. So with all this, how does this all connect with your position on the Monterey Peninsula Pride Board? Is there a connection between the two?

01:07:20.340

Kylee Hawthorne: Yeah, there's actually a lot of overlap that's been happening. Which is-- I didn't even realize how much it would be, but it's like, oh. I sometimes forget if I'm doing it in my like-- You know, Jeezy advisory capacity or the board capacity, because it's the same-- it'll be very similar things. And it's so-- I think the main thing has been like-- you know, the board wants or needs the contacts, right? Like, they really want to focus on youth involvement. And so it's been great being able to use my school network. And like, meeting other GSA advisors and getting their contact info and connecting-- trying to connect all together through things like pride notes not happening anymore. But for Pride 2020, we were going to have a “sign making day for pride for all the GSA” and like host it at our school. And so-- invite all the different middle

schools and high schools in Monterey County to like, make their posters for pride to then march in the parade with these posters. And so like that-- you know, as a combination of the school aspect with the GSA-- but then getting to participate in pride and it's, it's, it's, yeah. I mean, I like that it feels like it's all sort of like, one kind of mission goal, right? And it feels important that we get to focus on students for a lot of it. Like, the future generation.

01:09:09.030

Q: Yeah. And how did you know about the position of Chair of Education and Outreach?

01:09:15.870

Kylee Hawthorne: On Instagram! [laughs]

01:09:16.170

Q: Oh! [laughs]

01:09:19.950

Kylee Hawthorne: I followed-- I honestly think I like typed, on Instagram, like, Pride Monterey, or like Monterey LGB-- like, something like that. Because I'm like-- really try and like-- get like-- want community and to connect people socially. And so, I think I was just typing in like random pages and then found Monterey Pride. And then, they just happened to be like, "Oh, we're hosting elections!" and like, I saw it on their story and I was like, "This is a sign." And then, so I just went to the first meeting. And then-- so, they were excited because they wanted to involve youth in schools and that like, you have an end with a school, you know what I mean? And that network. Then that'll be, like, a really good fit.

01:10:04.800

Q: Yeah. And what were your steps into getting that position?

01:10:10.500

Kylee Hawthorne: So I feel-- there was an application online. It asked questions. It didn't ask for like a resume or anything like that. But it had like, a bunch of questions about "what your experience was", "why you wanted it", "what you could offer" And then-- I don't-- I don't know if I was supposed to show up to the meeting or not, but I did. I just went to the next meeting. And then that's when they were deciding. So then, when I was there, I gave a little spiel kind of thing,

like-- And then, they had other applicants and the board voted. And then I just, yeah. It happened it was-- yeah.

01:10:54.480

Q: Yeah. And so, how has your experience been, overall, with the Monterey Peninsula Pride Board?

01:11:02.520

Kylee Hawthorne: It's been super, super cool. It is doing volunteer nonprofit-- Again, it's a whole new experience for me. Um, but I mean, it's super inspiring. Super awesome to work with people that are just like-- there's plenty people on there that they're just, you know, they're doing it out of their hearts, you know? There isn't like a-- there isn't necessarily a reason or a personal goal or anything like that, right? They're just like-- want to give back to the community. And then like, trying to connect all the different-- realizing how much, how many resources and organizations and people there are out there and just like-- how do we-- But like-- not very many people know about it, you know? It's just like-- there's so much here. Gosh! Like, you know? How can this not be more pushed out to everyone, you know? So I'm just trying to make all those connections and realize, you know, how much work people put into it. But then how, you know, how important it is and like, you know-- I just was recently, right before this, I was on the call with the Santa Cruz County, like all their GSA Organizations and all that. And there was like 20-

something people on the zoom call, all sharing resources and all the different events. And it's like, you know, Monterey is not quite there yet. You know, like a county-- not, they're not as organized as Santa Cruz-- was just like, realizing like "oh my gosh, that's super important. This matters" Like, it's not, you know, it really is just-- really, really matters. I think. Its-- Yeah, it's, it's super cool. I forget the question, but [laughs]

01:12:54.450

Giselle Monterrosas: No, it's okay, it's okay. You answered it. It's fine. So, what are some proud moments you've had while having that position?

01:13:05.670

Kylee Hawthorne: Um, I think-- that being I think-- I've said this before. But just being able to like connect people-- has been-- has felt really good, right? Like, not reinventing the wheel. It's like, here's this organization that has the infrastructure and the resources and like-- So, you know, like connecting them with our organization or another organization and just feel like it opens up like so many more doors for everyone involved. And just-- like proud moments-- I think just like being able to interact with people and get people that care and respond and are willing and, you know, taking time out of everyone's days and meeting and like, "okay, now, we're breaking up" and like "let's do XYZ." And then, like, come back together and actually seeing it progress and like make, you know, make changes. I'm like, "Oh my gosh" You know, if

you really set your mind or focus on to some of these things, you can get a lot done. It's just like having that-- the time and the motivation, I think, to do it.

Um, it's hard, like so many-- you know, we were involved in planning like an International Day of Visibility. That was a whole thing, that is now just cancelled, right? Like the Youth Leadership Summit in Salinas, like, always people putting all the time and effort, just like cancelled, you know? And it's like that's-- I think seeing all of the Pride 2020 cancelled. I don't-- That's not-- I don't-- That's not common knowledge yet. But I mean, yeah-- but that's going to be, right? Like that's-- It's going to be pushed back to just be 2021 like all-- So I think that's-- I think those would have been like the super proud moments to like see everything come together and like see all of the people like interact and like, see-- I can just imagine, like, you know, the students' faces when they're meeting, like, students from other schools or other-- But yeah, I think everyone's just willing to, like-- because now, the next step is how we're going to make this virtual. So that's been like-- what's on the table now is like-- how can we offer resources and community and support, um, by zoom [laughs] like, virtually. So that's been the focus now.

01:15:49.020

Q: Yeah. And since you mention that Pride 2020, unfortunately, has to be canceled now, um-- But besides the point. For you, why is pride so important here as an event?

01:16:06.750

Kylee Hawthorne: Um, I mean, I think Monter-- like I've only been in Monterey for like two years and I've been actively working to build community and really, like, these-- I think, you know, taking big steps in that direction. And it's been tough and I know there are a bunch of queer people everywhere, my [unclear], you know? I'm like-- Just the-- I don't know, maybe everyone's connected and I just don't know about it, right? But it just feels like there should be more of that. And I think pride is just like such a good way to bring together, you know, the different generations and the different, you know, groups within the LGBTQ community. Um, and feeling this support from the city and from the different vendors and from, you know, people that the businesses that are willing to donate or offer their time and space like-- I think that-- It's just like-- it's just like, important. It is like, no, there are, you know-- This is a safe space with a lot of people that are willing to work to make it that way. I think is important and it is kind of that one time where I think everybody can, kind of, come together from all different, you know, groups and whatever to like, share. And like, the common, you know [laughs] It's like-- what is it? Like, the common pride. Like just the, you know, being prideful on that day and-- Yeah, I think, really, it's bringing everyone together and connecting people and then if, you know, if I learned anything from this social distancing shelter in place, it's how important connection with other humans is. Unlike-- and how-- Yeah. And so I think-- even just like-- in the preparation, right.? And like, everybody-- like, even that is just connecting people and it's important.

01:18:14.910

Q: Yeah, definitely. I agree with that 100%. So, um, how is the LGBT community in Monterey County unique from different communities?

01:18:30.390

Kylee Hawthorne: Oooo. Oh my gosh. You know, I don't know. [pauses] Gosh, I don't know. I don't know how well, you know-- I still feel like, kind of, like almost new to the Monterey community and even like before that-- How I just-- Again, I just think that there's-- they're not as connected-- at least from what I can see, right? I just feel like there could be so many more spaces and ways for people to be connected. That doesn't-- that isn't happening. Um, I don't know. And there isn't really like, you know, a gay bar or like a, you know-- that's like a designated, kind of, area. We don't have like a-- What is it-- what is it called-- like an off-- even like an off-- like a diversity center, you know? Um, Yeah. It just seems like there's a lack. And there used to be, right? Like, I know there used to-- not -- maybe not like a [unclear] diversity center-- but there used to be a gay bar. Um, there used to be-- and even like with all like the GSA networks. It's like, Santa Cruz County, they are way, way more connected and doing so much more. And it feels like there's not a lot of that. And it's-- I don't know what it is about the community that, you know, makes it feel that way, but-- Yeah I don't know. I think it's-- it's hard for me to answer that.

01:20:20.820

Giselle Monterrosas: No, yeah, you're right. I think-- I feel like there isn't really a designated area for LGBT People or for anyone like-- somewhere designated. I don't see that anywhere, either [laughs] Yeah. But okay. So, going back to your title as a teacher, what are your opinions in involving LGBT topics in the classroom?

01:20:51.030

Kylee Hawthorne: Oh, um, yeah. I mean, I think that 100%, like, overly need to include them disproportionately. Yeah, I mean, at my school, we're having-- There's-- even as low as the kindergarten classroom-- they're reading-- um, trying-- what is-- like a picture-- uh, like a picture book? Yeah, I guess just a book. They're with, um, you know, LGBTQ+ storylines and that's-- even in like the kindergarten class and I think it's super important. And kind of like, I was saying, you know, there are plenty of students that are going to be like, particularly engaged or interested right? When they see that. Um, and I think it-- I mean, as much as we can just make it like-- this is like-- this is obviously, "okay this is great." Like, be proud. Like, it's super important. I think it's-- they're going to remember that. You know, their identity was accepted and ported by their teachers and their principles and there're more than they're going to remember, like, you know, any content or anything else, like I think that messaging is what will carry away with them. And I think what's really going to have a huge-- or could have a huge impact on what they do in the future and like, how they feel about themselves in the future.

01:22:31.020

Q: Yeah, definitely. And so what advice would you give to other teachers who do not know exactly how to like weave in LGBT topics in the classroom?

01:22:52.260

Kylee Hawthorne: I mean, just go for it. [laughs] Like, try it out. I don't think there's like, you know, like a downside to, you know, being, I guess-- modeling that-- the support and like, the confidence and like, the acceptance and making it, you know, known that you're on their side. And, um, I think is super important. And I think, you know, I do-- as it would all like curriculum stuff, I think working, reaching out to other people and, you know, finding a lot of outside support and what's already out there. Like, there are so many different resources and lesson plans and lists of, you know, things to do. That you don't really have to, like, kind of like, reinvent the wheel. And I think, you know, reaching out and trying to be involved. Um, yeah. I don't--. What advice about-- Yeah, I mean I would just say, you know, do it. And its like--don't-- the argument that like, "oh, like they're too young" or whatever. I don't think is, really, you know-- I don't really think that makes, you know, much sense. Like I think-- from the younger-- that, you know, we start-- the more just, like-- okay, it was, you know-- accepted and obvious and like the status quo, it becomes. And so I think that's important.

01:24:39.990

Q: Yeah, definitely. And so with that, for example, what advice would you give to teachers-- for example let's say-- what type of language should teachers use in the classroom to DEFEND LGBT or to be inclusive. Like, for example, kids saying "that is so gay" to something as a put down or relating LGBT with love or, as such?

01:25:09.780

Kylee Hawthorne: Mm hmm. Um-- what do I-- so when students are like "thats gay" like, talking about something random. I'm like, "How do you know the sexual orientation of that shoe" or whatever. And they're like, "What? You just said SEX!" Um, but I think, like, right? Like clearly making it, you know-- turning it into a learning moment. Like clearly that, like, that's not okay. Like, I don't agree with that or that's not, you know, like, like a way that we-- or that's not a respectful way to do something. Just, I guess, making it known to the other students, if there are students, of LGBT community, even if they're not. Like that's not something that you do. And then I think really just, like, trying to, kind of, figure out where like-- I always asked questions, like, pieing, kind of, questions to try and get out, like, where that idea or thought is coming from. Because I think that, you know, whether-- a lot of times it's students that just don't really know what they're saying, right? Using impact statements like-- because I'll do that now, a lot to where I'm like that just, you know-- when you said that, I felt-- It made me like-- it didn't make me feel good-- It can make me feel sad. It kind of made me feel scared, you know?

And I think a lot of times, they'll be like-- that's not their intention, you know? They're like, "Wait, what?" like "I wasn't trying to make you sad", you know? And then it's kind of, it's not putting like the blame on them, it's just explaining how it made you feel. Um, I think most times they're not trying to actually be hurtful. And I think just being open to learning about it and, you know, asking questions and collaborating and talking with other staff members and, like I said, you know, there's so many resources and like safe space trainings and like all that, that are out there. Because I think, right? Being scared or avoiding it because like, you don't know how to handle it or how to respond correctly. Um, I think that's kind of what happens a lot. But just like, you know, be okay with that. Like, everybody's learning. Everyone's doing their best. And so just, don't let it shut you down or, you know, make you not respond. But that doesn't mean-- that is a tough one, right? Because I'll definitely have students that "so and so, said this" you know? And "It made me feel this way" and then it's like, you know-- yeah. But I think definitely having it super-- obviously be like, "That's not okay" But like, "let's talk about why" is important.

01:28:11.460

Q: Yeah, definitely. So, um, yeah. So, a little off topic-- based on that, are there any future goals that you have in mind that you want to accomplish? Like for your GSA club or for the Monterey Peninsula Pride?

01:28:32.760

Kylee Hawthorne: Yeah, I-- so like immediately, I think really trying to figure out how to keep the community connected virtually is really important. I know everybody's struggling right now. And so I think trying to move this to a more virtual setting and keep the progress going and keep-- is super important. And I know, um, you know, there's still wanting to like celebrate on the date of Pride, is important for a lot of people. But then, you know, it obviously can't be done in person. And so, I think-- Yeah, more immediately just figuring out all this virtual tech stuff because I feel a lot of resistance to that. I think a lot of people fuel resistance to it, but it's like, super important right now and it's an opportunity to learn a lot about this.

I know next year, definitely getting a big net-- a bigger network and building on the network of GSA and advisors in Monterey County and just all the other like resources available for youths and like, you know, hosting events where students from different schools can meet each other and form a larger community rather than just their school. And that's the direction that we're sort of heading, that's been put on hold. So, I think next year, you know, now that we've had, like, kind of the practice-- starting to get that set up really having that take off next year and still being able to have the private event, um, and, you know, keep everyone connected. I know-- you know the-- Yeah. I think that's the biggest goal. Is just to be able to sustain all the momentum that's been going on. Like this, you know, past year and like keeping that going through this. But also like adapting to the immediate needs by going virtual. So there's like-- there's like a worldwide virtual pride thing going on that I recently got a link to. So, I think that this could be an opportunity right to click to connect on an, even like, bigger level than just the county.

01:31:06.300

Q: Yeah, yeah, that's really cool. Something virtual that we have to make that, at least, to just stay connected with everybody. [laughs] Yeah. So, yeah. So with that, now, coming back to the sad reality, because of the corona virus here in the United States, how has the pandemic affected your teaching? How are your students doing?

01:31:33.960

Kylee Hawthorne: They're [laughs softly] A lot of them are struggling. I think its-- they're used to seeing their friends every single day and you can just tell because they're, you know, messaging on Google Hangouts or like zoom calling all the time. And, just to like, say “what's up” you know? I think-- it's been hard. I think it's hard too because we're relying on them to reach out like-- it's largely on them to kind of reach out for support. Um, and even like as adults, right? Like, I find it hard to reach out for support. So it's just, you know, they already have all these feelings and they don't know what they mean! Like in regular life, you know? And now it's like, all these other feelings and, you know, I can't imagine. You know, I had to force myself to, like, get and shower in the morning because otherwise. But, how-- a 12 year old doesn't know how to do that, you know? They don't know that they need to do that. Though I feel like “sitting in bed and I'm going to be in bed all day and I feel horrible, man” It's like they-- How can we expect, you know? And parents are trying to work full time from home and also be these full time teachers that can teach multiple students at multiple grade levels through technology, which I think, you know, a lot of people aren't-- I hated technology before this and avoided it at all,

like, you know? Never wanted to like explore new things and now it's just like, "Gosh, everyone has to"

But I think it's really-- and I'm trying to be super reflective about this. Thinking about, you know, what do the students actually need from their teacher. Like what role of a teacher is necessary. Um, and what they can, kind of like-- and what parts they can, kind of like, do on their own. And, I don't know if like that articulated that well. But just, you know, they're having-- they have all these awesome ideas and I'm super interested in and curious. And they don't necessarily need me to be telling them those things. But like, they need the structure and clarity and directions and expectations. And it's just been super interesting to sort of, like, to see that because it's like, "Oh my gosh", you know? Sometimes maybe my presence is like-- and like parts-- like grades and due dates, right? Like, that's kind of, like, might be like stifling. They're learning in some ways-- I've had, you know, students that had to zoom conversations and record and sent it to me. And it's like, "the time constraint" of, like, "oh, it's due today" and like "these are the questions you should be talking about" like that have-- really watching that like hinder their learning. Like, they were off on these amazing tangents, like, having these super in depth conversations and they're like, "oh wait, let's get back to the-- let's get back to the question" da-da-da. And I'm like, "No! Keep going! That was great!" Um, so, I think, its a huge opportunity for us, as teachers, to really pay attention to that and get, like, super, super interesting insight on what, you know, we're necessary for and what they kind of -- just need support doing and guidance with.

01:35:13.470

Q: Yeah, definitely. That's really, really cool. So, um, well, this has been a journey. And sadly, we're coming to an end. But, just like a few more questions, if that is okay with you?

Kylee Hawthorne: Yeah.

01:35:35.010

Q: Yeah? Okay. So, let's say-- What do you most hope, for yourself, in the future?

01:35:49.680

Kylee Hawthorne: Ooooo-- what do I most hope for myself?-- Um, I guess that I can just be like at peace with whatever my journey is. And just stop trying to use external things to define my self worth [laughs] I mean, I know that's like real deep, but like, that's kind of what my reflection has been. I just, you know, being like, okay and like compassionate towards myself, no matter what it is. Um, and not feeling like, I need to prove that repeatedly in all these weird ways or different ways. Um, and yeah, that I can continue to build relationships and connections with other humans that are healthy and positive and bring joy to everyone involved. That's-- yeah.

Like being home and for a lot of alone time recently. I'm definitely just like, reflecting on ALL that. Like this "Go, go, go, go. Have to do this, this, this, this." all the time. Like, I don't-- you know, just carrying around so much anger and stress and anxiety with it. And I'm like, "why am I doing all of that to myself" you know? Like, it just doesn't seem necessary. So it just-- being at peace with whatever.

01:37:23.490

Q: Yeah, that's sweet. I like that. [laughs] So, yeah. So with that, what do you hope your legacy to be?

01:37:36.000

Kylee Hawthorne: Oooo. That is such a good question. I guess, that I made people feel-- well, I did my part in like, people feeling competent and secure and proud of who they are and, you know, not-- Yeah, I'm not placing like judgment on people. Um, and I think, too-- I just always go back to the social connection thing and just feeling, you know, that's something that I have to offer, is like connecting people and like doing what I can to leave people feeling more supported in themselves. And like, you know, I feel real empowered about my identity and I know, you know, that's not the case for lots of people. And so I feel like using my voice and, you know, if I can, like, go through this life, like, you know, rubbing in people's faces and being confident about it, maybe for the next person, it won't be as-- it'll-- the path might be a little bit smoother. I

don't know. I don't even know if that makes sense. Um, but yeah. I just-- I think just leaving people feeling happy and connected and also have any-- just like at peace with whatever they are. Maybe the same for me.

01:39:27.450

Q: Yeah, okay. And-- Yeah, so also with that, do you have any advice for young students who are just beginning their journey, right now, through high school-- middle school, high school to college? Do you have any advice for them?

01:39:55.350

Kylee Hawthorne: Lets see. I guess to like-- I want to say like-- not figure out who you are-- just like be okay with who you are and be authentic in that. And, you know, you'll attract people that-- in your life-- that appreciate you and love you, if you are you know your authentic self. And like you'll, you know, you'll find people that cherish that and love that. And being compassionate to yourself and not, you know, not being super critical or judgmental. And just, you know, do your-- do your best [laughs] And sometimes your past isn't this fabulous, you know, perfect, whatever. And like that's-- it's perfect, you know? Even if it doesn't feel that way. And, yeah. And maybe-- be in the moment as much as possible and stop and think about-- Like, reflect on things. I think-- kind of going through life like, you know, with all these layers and like, sort of like, blind, like what's really happening can-- and just go, go, go, go, go. And then all

of a sudden you're like, "Wait, I don't even know what I'm doing anymore" Yeah. I think that's what I got.

01:41:33.180

Q: Yeah, no, thank you for that. That was really sweet. Thank you. Um, so yeah. So, what advice would you give to yourself at any point in your life, if you could go back in time?

01:41:49.860

Kylee Hawthorne: Gosh. I would just shake myself and be like, "You are good! You're doing a good job" Like, "don't be so like AH" you know? Just be like, It's kind of the same as what-- you know what I said-- just be kind to yourself and compassionate to yourself and not so critical, and not so blinded by other people's expectations and judgments and like, you know? Just-- I was like-- doing a lot of things that I think were good and were right. But like in the moment, had no idea, you know? Still thought that everything was bad and wrong. And it's like, "what?" How-- I don't know how to, you know, change that or tell someone different than I, you know-- I don't know if it's just experience. But I just wish that I just wasn't so mad at myself for so long. I think, without even knowing, that I was mad at myself until I wasn't mad at myself anymore. And then I'm like, "Oh my gosh, I'm really mad at myself for a really long time"

01:43:02.160

Q: Yeah, okay. Well, yeah. Thank you so much for your words that created such a beautiful oral history piece. That is all on my end, but is there anything that you would like to include, that I haven't asked you, that you wanted to discuss in the interview?

01:43:19.980

Kylee Hawthorne: Do you have to transcribe all of this?? [laughs]

01:43:23.130

Q: Yes [laughs]

[END OF INTERVIEW]