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## Skye-Gia Garcia of OutReach LGBTQ+

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March 5, 2024

**MK:** Hello and welcome to *THE CHILD AND ITS ENEMIES*, a podcast for and about queer and neurodivergent kids and teens living out anarchy and youth liberation.

Here at *THE CHILD AND ITS ENEMIES* we believe that youth autonomy is not only crucial to queer and trans liberation, but to anarchy itself. Governance is inherently based on projecting linear narratives of time and Development and gender onto our necessarily asynchronous and atemporal queer lives, and kids, teens, and everyone else affected by anti-child ageism are at the center of this form of oppression.

Our goal with the podcast is to create a space by and for kids and teens that challenges all forms of control and inspires us to create neuroqueer, feral, *ageless* networks of care.

I'm your host, mk zariel. My pronouns are they/them, I'm fifteen years old, and I'm the youth correspondent at the Anarchist Review of Books, author of the blog Debate Me Bro, and

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Retrieved on May 30 2024 from <https://feeds.acast.com/public/shows/65de9ee46569fa0017d9fc9d>.

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organizer of some all-ages queer spaces in my city and online. With me today is our first-ever guest, Skye Gia Garcia, who is a community organizer and freedom fighter! Hello, Skye!

**Skye-Gia:** I am stoked to be your first guest. As MK Zariel said - my name is Skye Gia Garcia - my pronouns are she/her/hers and my business in Madison is primarily centered around my work with OutReach LGBTQ Community Center - along with my personal advocacy work that continues no matter who I am affiliated with.

**MK:** So, you work with Dane County Youth Action Board, for a project led by queer, trans, and unhoused young people, correct?

**Skye-Gia:** I am employed by OutReach LGBTQ+ Community Center here in Madison. I was hired to work for a program now called Everstrong - which at one point was called YHDP. Everstrong is a program that has been designed and led by Dane County's Youth Action Board - YAB is made up of youth between the ages of 13-24 who have a lived experience of housing insecurity and some of them just so happen to be queer! This has resulted in the program design being inclusive to all people especially those most marginalized.

**MK:** I'd love to learn more about that—but first, I'm curious about how you organized when *you* were a younger person. Did you have access to spaces like the Youth Action Board? Or was there other organizing, or other ways of experiencing and creating anarchy, that were meaningful for you?

**Skye-Gia:** I wish. No. There was nothing for me to access like the youth action board in my hometown of Rockford, IL. I believe that every city should have a youth action board and that we should continue to be led by radical youth who wish

to break the molds that bind us. The best way I was able to create anarchy was by defying gender norms that existed. I would purposely position myself to be put in a space that was historically not meant for me and at times this would create chaos because due to the support I would have from my peers we would successfully overthrow authority rooted in heteronormativity/patriarchy.

**MK:** So tell me more about the Youth Action Board. What kind of cool projects do you support these queer kids in?

**Skye-Gia:** Honestly my favorite way to support the Youth Action Board is by creating space for their autonomy to flourish respectfully. I've made sure to show up in meetings with other adults who may not understand the importance of their leadership due to indoctrination and I continuously center our compass on the truth that this project is to be led by the Youth Action Board and without their leadership we simply wouldn't have it. Which would be a shame. This program is designed to be like no other social service offered in the area so we are able to provide necessary support in ways that hasn't been possible - all in an effort to end youth homelessness.

**MK:** What have your experiences with YAB taught you about youth liberation? And more broadly, what would you say youth liberation means to you?

**Skye-Gia:** My experience with the Youth Action Board has reminded me of the success that comes from having no hierarchy of leadership. To me youth liberation means listening to the voices of the youth and allowing those voices to overpower

our own so long as it is rooted in expanding consciousness and liberation of all oppressed people.

**MK:** What's your relationship to anarchy like as a trans- and youth-liberationist organizer?

**Skye-Gia:** My relationship to anarchy looks like being a part of a multitude of different horizontal projects and constantly sacrificing any type of privilege I could hold by refusing to stay silent. Instead I put myself on the front lines and assure that the institutions who wish to uphold the patriarchy that is responsible for this mess know who I am and who I stand with.

**MK:** What advice would you have for youth and teens who want to get into community organizing, or just generally liberate themselves and find more autonomy and care? Or, what would have been useful for you when you were younger?

**Skye-Gia:** Accept whatever fear you have and work with it. Allow that fear to guide you in identifying barriers because it can work in your favor. While fear is heavily corrupted and influenced by external factors fear can serve a purpose that is productive. It's a human experience and I would say the more I have healed my relationship with fear the more it has served to protect me. If you want to get into community organizing because you recognize the ways it will liberate you and your community - start your own collective. Do not allow the fact that you may only start with a few people to deter you. Remember to value the contribution and power that just one person has to offer. Even if that one person is just you. Believe in yourself. I believe in you and if you ever forget - find me! I'll remind you.

**MK:** So if you could say anything to a teen out there struggling with something going on in their life and looking for community or connection, what would that be?

**Skye-Gia:** If you find yourself disappointed and uninterested in the status quo of mainstream society and want something different for yourself. Please don't give up. Listen to my voice. Please don't give up. Another world is possible. Another world is happening at the exact same time. I see and live it with my eyes and soul everyday. Allow my voice to support you in shattering the illusion that your community isn't trying to find you. Shatter the illusion that your community doesn't exist. We are here. We are looking for you and we believe that we will win.

**MK:** Heck yeah. And finally, any shameless plugs?

**Skye-Gia:** You can find me on Instagram @SkyeBinary and you can find me on Facebook at Skye Gia Garcia. I've got a few FB accounts floating around so make sure you add my most recent one.