

# TEDx SantaCruz



# Rising Together

April 13, 2024, Crocker Theater  
Cabrillo College



## Welcome

The TEDxSantaCruz team & Presenting Sponsor Community Foundation Santa Cruz County welcome you to "Rising Together."

TEDxSantaCruz is a non-profit, volunteer organization, and this year's team is privileged to produce an extraordinary, joyful, inclusive, and thought-provoking day full of "Ideas Worth Spreading."

We hope you learn, get inspired, spark conversations, and make new connections as we rise together to build a Santa Cruz County where everyone can thrive now and in the future.

We are incredibly grateful to all the sponsors, speakers, volunteers, artists, vendors, production team members, and attendees who are making this day possible. Thank you!

Yours in Community & Action,

**Consuelo Alba, Elana Solon, Nada Miljković & Jenny Kurzweil**

TEDxSantaCruz Co-Organizers

**Susan True**

CEO, Community Foundation Santa Cruz County

**#TEDxSantaCruz** is our event hashtag for social media!

## Schedule

9:00 AM

### WELCOME

*Creating Space: White Hawk Dancers*

*Land Acknowledgment: Dr. Rebecca Hernandez*  
(she/her/hers)

*The Spark of Rising Together: Susan True* (she/her/hers)

9:20 AM

### SESSION I: WHO WE ARE

*MariaElena De La Garza* (she/her/hers): *What Did You Call Me? Unleashing and Redefining the Power of the Latina*

*Effron "Donnie" Veal* (he/him/his): *From Incarceration to Inspiration: The Transformative Power of Education*

*Antonella De La Tore Marcenaro* (they/she/elle/ell): *Comunidad Al Aire Libre /Community Outdoors*

*Kara Meyberg Guzman* (she/her/hers): *The Rise of Tiny News*

*Luna HighJohn-Bey* (she/her/hers): *How to Follow a HUNCH*

*Elie Mabanza* (he/him/his): Musical Performance

**BREAK - 25 minutes**

11:00 AM

### SESSION II: HOW WE EVOLVE

*Kyra Bobinet* (she/her/hers): *The Secret to an Unstoppable Brain*

*Juliano Calil* (he/him/his): *Immersive Narratives for Climate Awareness*

*Daniel Nemire* (he/him/his): Musical Performance

*Stephen-Will Weir* (he/him/his): *A NEW Fashion Trend That Can Save the Earth*

*Esabella Bonner* (she/her/hers): *Values as Verbs: How to Be About that Action*

*Kat Armstrong* (they/them/theirs) /*Trashy*  
& *Jorge Guillen* (he/him) /*Xinistra: Drag Story Time: Protecting and Celebrating Queer Spaces*

LUNCH 12:20 - 1:50 PM

2:00 PM

### SESSION III: HOW WE SOLVE

*Natalia Ocampo-Peñuela* (she/her/hers): *The Power of Birdwatching: Bridging Tropical Prosperity and Conservation*

*Galina Hale* (she/her/hers): *Funding Climate Solutions*

*Nicole Beck* (she/her/hers): *Embrace the Rain for Climate Change*

*August Lee Stevens* (she/her/hers) &  
*Angela Chambers* (she/her/hers): Musical Performance & Dance

*Terry Carr* (he/him/his): *The Power of Reconnecting with Our Food*

*Alex Chavez-Guerrero* (he/him/his), *Jacob Martinez* (he/him/his) & *Martin Vargas-Vega* (he/him/his): *Beyond the Fields: The Transformative Power of Networks*

**BREAK - 25 minutes**

3:45 PM

### SESSION IV: HOW WE RISE TOGETHER

*Maria Cadenas* (she/her/hers): *Changing the Game: Our Future Economy*

*Madeline Aliah* (she/her/hers): *Beyond the Safe Space*

*Daisy Nuñez* (she/her/hers): *The Hope Club: Grieving Together*

*Keith Greeninger* (he/him/his): Musical Performance

*César Rojas Bravo* (he/him/his): *Shared Humanity, Shared Cosmos: Connecting Through the Night Sky*

FINALE - Musical Performance

5:00 - 6:00 PM

### AFTER PARTY

with *Afrobeats & Samba Soul*  
(Outside the Crocker Theater)

*Exact program schedule and times subject to change.*

**TEDxSantaCruz SPEAKERS**



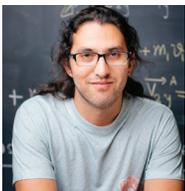
**Alex Chavez-Guerrero**  
*Software Engineer, SuperCMO*  
 He/Him/His

Alex Chavez-Guerrero, a Watsonville-based software engineer, began his tech journey at Buoy Labs, later acquired by Resideo Technologies. With a Bachelor's in Computer Engineering from San Jose State University, he excels in cutting-edge technologies. At Digital NEST, Alex advocates for scalable social capital impact, emphasizing intergenerational narratives, growth, and mentorship. Alex will be speaking with Jacob Martinez and Martín Vargas Vega.



**Antonella De La Tore Marcenaro**  
*Founder/Executive Director, PUENTES*  
 They/She/Elle/Ell

Antonella is a Queer, able-bodied, neurodivergent, light-skinned Peruvian immigrant with 10+ years of experience in outdoor education. Antonella founded PUENTES to facilitate outdoor programs for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color that center joy, community building, personal growth, and outdoor skills development. A Counseling Psychology master's student, Antonella aims to support the mental health of Latinx individuals and communities.



**César Rojas-Bravo**  
*Astronomy Ph.D. Candidate, UC Santa Cruz*  
 He/Him/His

César Rojas-Bravo, born in Costa Rica, pursued a double major in Physics and Classical Philology (the study of Ancient Greece and Rome) before moving to California. Currently completing a Ph.D. at UC Santa Cruz, he is dedicated to bringing astronomy to underrepresented communities globally. Graduating soon, César enjoys exploring diverse cultures, languages, and people in his free time.



**Daisy Nuñez**  
*School Counselor, Watsonville High School*  
 She/Her/Ella

Daisy Nuñez, daughter of farm workers, serves as a counselor at Watsonville High School and Hartnell College. As a thanatologist and Hospice board member, she brings a unique perspective to her work supporting individuals experiencing grief. In her spare time, she volunteers as a lector at Saint Patrick's Church and enjoys traveling as well as spending time with her family.



**Effron "Donnie" Veal**  
*Program Coordinator, Rising Scholars Cabrillo College*  
 He/Him/His

Effron "Donnie" Veal, is an education advocate. After 23 years in prison, Donnie emerged as a beacon of resilience,

navigating academia and societal reintegration since his release. His journey from confinement to community empowerment exemplifies the transformative power of education and determination. Donnie earned his undergraduate degree in Sociology from UC Santa Cruz in 2023.



**Esabella Bonner**  
*Founder/Executive Director, Black Surf Santa Cruz*  
 She/Her/Hers

Esabella Bonner, entrepreneur, and visionary, orchestrated one of Santa Cruz County's largest protests in 2020, drawing 5,000 attendees. This sparked her commitment to movement work, fostering inclusivity for black and brown individuals at paddle-outs for Black Lives Matter. Her organization Black Surf Santa Cruz aims to promote physical, spiritual, and communal wellness and healing through surfing, recreation, and education.



**Galina Hale**  
*Professor of Economics, UC Santa Cruz*  
 She/Her/Hers

Galina Hale, a former Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco Research Advisor, focuses on mainstream finance in climate solutions. Her research explores global food system sustainability and international financial stability, emphasizing climate risks. With 30+ published articles, she serves on multiple editorial boards and presents her work regularly at scholarly and policy meetings worldwide.



**Jacob Martinez**  
*Founder & CEO, Digital NEST*  
 He/Him/His

Jacob Martinez founded Digital NEST, empowering rural youth for employment. He spent nearly 10 years encouraging Latina girls to study computer science. Jacob is on the boards of Santa Cruz Works, Center for Rural Innovation, and the advisory council for the Aspen Institute Technology Accountability Coalition. Jacob will speak with Martín Vargas Vega and Alex Chavez-Guerrero.



**Jorge Guillen/Xinistra**  
*Drag Artist*  
 He/Him/His, She/Her/Hers

Jorge Guillen (he/him), or Xinistra (she/her) in drag, holds a UC Santa Cruz modern literature degree. He emphasizes self-advocacy in his work supporting adults with developmental disabilities. A Pajaro Valley Pride board member, Xinistra, through drag, advocates for the LGBTQI+ community, empowering others and creating safe spaces for queer individuals. Jorge/Xinistra will speak with Kat/Trashy.

**TEDxSantaCruz SPEAKERS** *(continued)*



**Juliano Calil**  
**Founder, Virtual Planet Technologies**  
 He/Him/His  
 Juliano Calil, Senior Fellow at the Center for the Blue Economy and Adjunct Professor at the Middlebury Institute, pioneers science communication for climate action. With a Ph.D. from UC Santa Cruz and a Master's from UC Santa Barbara, he collaborates with communities on innovative solutions for climate challenges like coastal flooding, wildfires, and heatwaves.



**Kara Meyberg Guzman**  
**CEO/Co-Founder, Santa Cruz Local**  
 She/Her/Hers  
 Kara Meyberg Guzman prioritizes serving marginalized communities through fair, accurate, and accessible news. As board president of the Tiny News Collective, a national nonprofit, she supports early-stage news entrepreneurs aiming to serve their communities, believing in the power of local media to elevate diverse voices for effective local democracy.



**Kat Armstrong/Trashy**  
**Drag Artist**  
 They/Them/Theirs  
 Kat Armstrong, AKA Trashy, holds a Bachelor's in Social Work, equipping them for community strengthening. Currently pursuing a Clinical Mental Health Master's, they aim to support queer, gender-nonconforming, and trans individuals. As a non-binary individual, Kat fosters safe spaces and community through drag. They are a member of Drag Story Time Santa Cruz. Kat/Trashy will be speaking with Jorge/Xinistra.



**Kyra Bobinet**  
**Chief Executive Officer, Fresh Tri**  
 She/Her/Hers  
 Kyra Bobinet, MD-MPH, specializes in health behavior change, particularly the know-do gap (knowing, but not doing). She turned to neuroscience after 30 years of testing interventions and discovered the Iterative Mindset Method™. A Harvard Health Innovator awardee, Stanford educator, and Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe citizen, Dr. Bobinet pioneers sustained, brain-based behavior change.



**Luna HighJohn-Bey**  
**Lead Researcher, London Nelson Legacy Initiative**  
 She/Her/Hers  
 Luna HighJohn-Bey, a Santa Cruz resident for over a decade, serves as Historian in Residence at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History. Originating from Washington, D.C., she passionately explores community-based history, emphasizing the transformative power of understanding our shared past. Luna's dedicated work unveils overlooked narratives, recognizing community-led historical research as vital for genuine liberation.



**Madeline Aliah**  
**Poet, Orator**  
 She/Her/Hers  
 Madeline Aliah, an 18-year-old transgender poet, draws on biracial South Asian roots and a dually religious upbringing in Christianity and Ismaili Islam, to cultivate empathy across diverse audiences. A member of the Santa Cruz Queer Trans Youth Council, she advocates for inclusivity, addressing educators on fostering diverse school culture. Her debut chapbook, *This is My Body, Poems by a Teen Trans Fem*, was released in January 2024.



**Maria Cadenas**  
**Executive Director, Ventures**  
 Ella/She/Her  
 Maria Cadenas, MBA, born in Mexico and raised in California, is dedicated to championing economic prosperity for rural Latine working-class families on the California Central Coast. For over 20 years, she has led initiatives addressing issues from LGBTQ employee rights at Fortune 500 companies to immigrant community policies as the former Associate Director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin.



**MariaElena De La Garza**  
**Executive Director, Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, Inc.**  
 She/Her/Ella  
 MariaElena De La Garza is a seasoned nonprofit leader with over 30 years of experience. She strives to promote equity and is an advocate for the immigrant and low-income communities. She has been honored with many awards, including the UC Santa Cruz Tony Hill Memorial Award for Social Justice and the Santa Cruz County Nexties Lifetime Achievement Award.



**Martín Vargas-Vega**  
**Founding Engineer, Habu**  
 He/Him/His  
 Martín Vargas-Vega, a Latinx philanthropist and software engineer from Watsonville, California, is devoted to bridging the digital divide. As an engineer, he combines innovation with a commitment to societal progress. A board member of DigitalNEST and leader in Latinos In Tech, Martín oversees the distribution of \$250,000+ in grants to Latinx-led nonprofits. Martín will be speaking with Jacob Martinez and Alex Chavez-Guerrero.

**TEDxSantaCruz SPEAKERS**

**Natalia Ocampo-Peñuela**  
*Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies, UC Santa Cruz*

She/Her/Ella

Natalia Ocampo-Peñuela, a Colombian conservation ecologist, employs spatial tools to assess human impacts on bird populations. Prioritizing conservation areas, she emphasizes solutions benefiting both biodiversity and local communities. An avid birdwatcher, Natalia has spent time leading birdwatching trips across Latin America, combining her passion for birds with her commitment to conservation.



**Stephen-Will Weir**

Growth & Sustainability Expert, Radar 2030  
He/Him/His

Stephen-Will Weir, a passionate global sustainability expert, aids in waste reduction and combating deforestation. Straightforward and determined, he's

deeply connected to family, friends, and community. Born in England, he now lives in Santa Cruz and has two grown sons. Stephen enjoys hiking, kite surfing, sailing, and nature. His superpower lies in encouraging others toward fun, easy, and rewarding low-impact lifestyles.



**Nicole Beck**  
*CEO, 2NDNATURE*

She/Her/Hers

Nicole Beck, with a Ph.D. in aquatic chemistry, is dedicated to bringing science to decision makers. As CEO of a technology firm, she utilizes stormwater GIS software,

empowering local governments and large landowners to manage urban runoff effectively. Her mission focuses on applying technical expertise to inform land management decisions and safeguard water resources.



**Terry Carr**

Co-founder, Vilij

He/Him/His

Terry Carr, an industrial designer, centers his work on crafting eco-friendly products connecting people with nature, most notably through his roles in automotive

design and clean energy innovation. He also co-founded his own company to inspire in-home food cultivation. Passionate about health and the environment, Terry aims to create harmony in our ever-changing world through every design endeavor.

**TEDxSantaCruz SPECIAL GUESTS**

**Dr. Rebecca Hernandez, Land Acknowledgment**

She/Her/Hers

Rebecca Hernandez, PhD (Mescalero/Warm Springs Apache and Mexican American), is the Community Archivist at the UC Santa Cruz University Library. There, she partners with community members to promote the acquisition, preservation, and use of archival materials documenting the histories of Santa Cruz County. She is driven by the desire to create equitable, creative spaces for people to learn and share ideas, stories, and histories.



**Susan True, The Spark of Rising Together**

She/Her/Hers

As CEO of Community Foundation Santa Cruz County, Susan continues her lifelong commitment to service and community. Prior, she worked with the Rainin Foundation, led First 5 Santa Cruz County, and was the Executive Director of CASA of Santa Cruz County. Susan hopes that she gives at least as much to others as has been given to her.



**White Hawk Indian Council for Children, Opening Dance**

White Hawk Indian Council for Children is a non-profit arts organization founded in 1982. They provide culturally relevant activities for youth and families primarily in the Pajaro Valley. Their traditional ceremonies of Danza Azteca and cultural arts workshops stimulate a strong sense of place in the world, cultural pride, and concern for the community and the natural environment.

## TEDxSantaCruz PERFORMERS



### Angela Chambers

She/Her/Hers

Angela Chambers is a community leader, advocate for youth, and acclaimed dance artist. Her journey in the arts shifted from Musical Theater to dance at UCSC, where she discovered its potential for personal transformation and social activism. Angela emphasizes access, equity, and excellence through her teaching and directing at Tannery World Dance & Cultural Center and the SCC Black Health Matters Initiative Youth Ambassador program.



### August Lee Stevens

She/Her/Hers

August Lee Stevens is a musician and singer-songwriter with an atmospheric range of indie soul and folk. A lover of storytelling, she uses music to cut into the heart, inviting people to look in on some of her most intimate moments. She just released her debut EP, Better Places, in partnership with Women's Audio Mission (WAM).



### Daniel Nemire

He/Him/His

Santa Cruz native Daniel Nemire has dedicated twenty years to honing his musical craft. As the frontman of hard rock band King Tide and also as a prolific solo acoustic artist, Daniel explores various genres in his guitar and vocals. Beyond performance, Nemire fosters community through music, seeing it as a force for societal reflection and transformation.



### Elie Mabanza

He/Him/His

Elie Mabanza, hailing from Congo Brazzaville, infuses his music with African roots, blending rhythm and harmony to narrate personal tales. Self-taught on guitar from age ten, his songs, sung in Lari, Lingala, French, and English, depict life's joys and sorrows. Through solo acts, duets, and with his band Mokili Wa, he spreads joy globally, advocating for unity amid suffering.



### Keith Greeninger

He/Him/His

Keith Greeninger is a seasoned troubadour and award-winning singer-songwriter. His masterfully crafted tunes have earned him top songwriting awards at the legendary Telluride Blue Grass and Kerrville Folk Festivals. His songs cut an honest, hard-worn path to places of simple truth about good people holding on to hope and instinct in a world that often tries to strip these things away.



After-Party Performers

### Afrobeats (Jase "Monk" Earl)

Afrobeats Nite Santa Cruz is an event that highlights the contemporary music of the African diaspora and the art of deejaying. Founded by Jase 'Monk' Earl in 2022, DJ Monk Earl envisions Afrobeats Nite as a vehicle for international artistic cooperation, giving opportunities for talent from across the diaspora to perform for and collaborate with the Santa Cruz community.



### Samba Soul Dance Company & Escola de Samba

Samba Soul, led by Gisella Ferreira, showcases authentic Brazilian Samba Dance, bringing the elegance and joy of Rio's Carnival to audiences in Santa Cruz, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, and Rio itself. The company energizes crowds with soulful performances and offers weekly Samba classes in Santa Cruz that are open to all.

## TEDxSantaCruz **EMCEES**

**Chelsea Alexandra Cabrera**

She/Her/Hers

Chelsea Alexandra Cabrera is the daughter of Cuban refugees, born and raised in Miami, Florida. In 2017, she moved to California to work as a travel nurse. After over a decade of high acuity care, she traded her stethoscope for an espresso machine and a dream. She is one of two co-founders of Santa Cruz's Mariposa Coffee Bar where folx can share stories over coffee, great music, and even better food.

**Tram Vu**

She/Her/Hers

Tram, a native of San Jose, opened the Sandwich Spot in Santa Cruz in the space that eight years later became Mariposa Coffee Bar. Mariposa is a place where cultures, stories, and a shared love of coffee, food, music, art, and radical self-expression vibrantly coexist. Tram, along with Chelsea Cabrera, has built a community space where conversations and connections take place every day.

## TEDxSantaCruz **CO-ORGANIZERS**

**Consuelo Alba, Co-Producer & Emcee**

She/Her/Hers

Consuelo Alba's work is grounded in equity, creativity, and joy. She is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Watsonville Film Festival which showcases primarily Latine and Indigenous stories to foster positive change. An award-winning documentary filmmaker, Consuelo serves as the Board Chair of the Arts Council Santa Cruz County and is a founding member of Rise Together, a coalition working locally to advance racial equity.

**Elana Solon, Co-Producer & Sponsorship Lead**

She/Her/Hers

Elana Solon is a community relationship-builder, connecting like-minded people and organizations to each other for mutual benefit and the greater good. With a background in operations, hospitality, and intercultural communication, Elana currently serves as Philanthropic Operations Officer at Community Foundation Santa Cruz County. She also serves as a Santa Cruz County Chamber of Commerce Ambassador and on the Board of Leadership Santa Cruz County.

**Jenny Kurzweil, Co-Producer & Project Manager**

She/Her/Hers

Jenny Kurzweil is a nonprofit storyteller who is passionate about using communications to advance social causes. She serves as the Communications Officer for Community Foundation Santa Cruz County and co-founder of Pie for the People Santa Cruz. Jenny loves baking pie, farmer's markets, gardening, writing, coalition building, community activism, and hiking with her dog Muggsy.

**Nada Miljković, Licensee, Co-Producer & Emcee**

She/Her/Hers

Nada Miljković is an artist, activist, collaborator, creator of media, performances, and installations, and UCSC Faculty Instructor and Project Manager for the Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurial Development. She is also on the Board of Directors for Arts Council Santa Cruz County.

## THANKS

Our deep gratitude to the incredible community of big-hearted volunteers who have lent their expertise, guidance, and time to TEDxSantaCruz.

### LEADERSHIP TEAM

Consuelo Alba  
Elana Solon  
Jenny Kurzweil  
Nada Miljković

### PRODUCTION

Jon Luini, *Technical & Event Co-Producer*  
Arthur Rosato, *Director*  
Sylvie Vray-Ent, *Lighting Designer/Technician*  
Jon Fox, *Technical Co-Producer*  
Olive Fox, *Stage Manager*  
Logan Gritton, *A2 Audio Tech*  
Jeff Eitzen, *A2 Audio Tech*  
Doug Farris, *Video engineer (V1)*  
Alex Parra, *Video Engineer (V2)*  
Ed Fritz, *Robotic Camera Operator*  
Dillon Draper, *Presentation Materials Lead*  
Kelly Dam, *Presentation Materials*  
Shinya Suzuki, *Streaming Engineer*  
Dayne Allen, *Camera Operator (Brick House Media)*  
Emily Cohan, *Speaker introduction animations*  
Tori Underwood, *Stagehand*

### VOLUNTEER LEADS

Andrew Dao, *Volunteer Coordinator*  
Grace Stetson, *Marketing & Communications Lead*  
Irene Tsouprake, *Speaker Curation & Lead Speaker Coach*  
Mary Andersen, *Social Media Marketing Lead*  
Raquel Cool, *Speaker Liaison*  
Stacey Marie Garcia, *Facilitated Lunch Program Lead*  
Vania Benavides, *Website Lead*

### SPEAKER COACHES

Alexandra Proca  
Andrea Roth  
Bettina Aptheker  
Elana Solon  
Gayle McCallum  
Janet Janssen  
Jenny Kurzweil  
Joel Hersch  
Jon Luini  
Leland B. Thompson  
Melissa Fowler  
Nada Khorchid  
Nada Miljković

### SPECIAL ADVISORS

Audries Blake  
David Warren  
Irene Tsouprake  
Jennifer Herrera  
Jon Luini  
Kevin Heuer  
Dr. Rebecca Hernandez  
Susan True

### DIALOGUE CIRCLE FACILITATORS

Ashlyn Adams  
Aurora Lowe  
Dustin Lopez  
Jorge Savala  
Jaime Molina  
Kelvin Nivens  
Dr. Peg Capers  
Dr. Rebecca Hernandez  
Ruby Vasquez  
Stephanie Barron Lu

### PHOTOGRAPHY

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### EVENT VOLUNTEERS

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Cesar Cuevas  
Christy Carico  
Cheryl Striepe

Donette Felker  
Erne Borg  
Hana Kong  
Hilary Bryant  
Isaac Robles  
Kendall Cook / Clay + Flower  
Kevin Heuer  
Kim White  
Larry McAdams  
Laura Partch  
Jaime Romero  
Janet Fine  
Judit Camacho  
Maria O'Hollearn  
Melissa Begin  
Michelle Stransky  
Eric Thiermann  
Pari Dar  
Rob Swartz  
Sabine Dukes  
Sarah Sondossi  
Serena Ramirez  
Shruti Kale  
Vadim Yapor  
Wanda Little  
Susan True

### CABRILLO/CROCKER THEATER STAFF

Morgan Miller, *PAC Coordinator*  
Marcel Tijoe, *Rigger*  
Elk Latham, *A1 Audio Engineer*  
Fabian Gauthier, *Assistant Stage Manager*  
Kathy Olson & Anna Elizabeth, *House Managers*

*Special thanks to the members of Rise Together Santa Cruz County, a coalition of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color leaders and a team from Community Foundation Santa Cruz County, who are working to advance racial equity locally. Rise Together members were the initial catalyst for this event and have participated as volunteers, speakers, advisors, and part of the leadership team. The Community Foundation Board of Trustees is a proud supporter of both Rise Together and this very special TEDxSantaCruz. We thank them for their leadership.*

### KEEP IN TOUCH

For more information about TEDxSantaCruz, please visit [tedxsantacruz.org](https://tedxsantacruz.org)

To keep up with future TEDxSantaCruz events and news, please follow us:

-  Facebook: [facebook.com/TEDxSantaCruz](https://facebook.com/TEDxSantaCruz)
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