

ROSEMARY MITFORD-TAYLOR

SHE/HER, THEY/THEM

APPLYING FOR GENERAL BOARD MEMBER

I am a 25 year old agender queer Pākehā person and although my hair may change with the seasons, my integrity remains firm. I hold my values close to my heart- my identity is built around values of respect, compassion, accountability, and consent. I am a very enthusiastic, expressive, true-to-myself person and my queerness is a hugely important part of who I am. I am committed to learning and always welcome opportunities to grow myself into a more understanding, well-informed activist. Creating is my biggest form of self-care: painting, scrapbooking, knitting- I can't get enough of arts and crafts! I am proud to be who I am and lucky to be in a happy and healthy relationship with my wonderful partner who enriches my world everyday. Together, we are delighted to be able to show the world- especially younger rainbow people- an example of being non-binary, queer, & in love!

What made you want to join the RY board?

They say home is where the heart is and my heart belongs to Aotearoa's rainbow community. Through my partner, a non-binary musician, I've had the honour of meeting many LGBTQIA+ teenagers all around the country and experiencing first hand just how much they benefit from positive queer role models that they can talk to and ask for advice. I've had meaningful conversations with rainbow young people and their whānau, both in person and online, that have shown me just how powerful and important it is to simply exist as openly and proudly as my partner and I do. In the position of Co-Chairperson of the RainbowYOUTH Executive Board, I would be able to actively enact positive change on a much greater scale through the guidance of RY's strategic direction and nurture a more prosperous future for all young rainbow people in Aotearoa. I greatly admire all the work RainbowYOUTH does empowering queer and gender diverse young people and dismantling the barriers they face in our society and I truly cherish the times when I have had the honour of volunteering with RY; connecting and uplifting young rainbow people is so valuable and means the world to me. To be able to contribute to the amazing mahi RY does would be a dream!

RainbowYOUTH is on a journey to proactively and respectfully uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi. How would you contribute to this journey?

As a Pākehā, I recognise it is my responsibility to listen to, learn from, and uplift the voices of tangata whenua who have always and continue to uphold the values of manaakitanga and kaitiakitanga for Aotearoa. As quick as White New Zealanders are to claim to embrace Maori culture and other non-Western cultures, the reality is that our society remains deeply ingrained with racism and it is crucial that we work together to constantly fight back against racism and be staunchly anti-racist. When it comes to upholding Te Tiriti values, I aim to

follow the 3 P's: partnership, participation, and protection. Firstly, partnership in prioritising and respecting Māori values and working together with Māori communities. Additionally, protection by way of actively doing the mahi to help protect and centre Māori language, culture, values, taonga, and takatapui. Last but certainly not least, participation by using te reo Māori in everyday conversations, emphasizing Māori involvement, and continuing to educate myself on Māori culture, language, and values.

What particular skills do you think you have that would make you suitable for the RY board?

I am a passionate, creative, empathetic person with excellent communication skills and my confidence and unshakeable demeanour gives me the ability to thrive under pressure. Additionally, I have an aptitude for problem-solving and I find myself searching for opportunities to improve my workplace and its processes, from reorganising supplies to creating filing systems to implementing more reliable methods of communication. Whereas I enjoy making personal connections with people, I truly operate best in a team environment and love being able to discuss and learn from others. Training and mentoring staff has consistently been a highlight at each role I have had; I love to be able to guide someone and I recognise it to be mutually beneficial as each time I train someone new, I gain a deeper understanding not only of my job, but of my role in this world. My experience in leadership positions has helped me become an organised and encouraging leader who focuses on fostering a healthy, compassionate environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing their ideas. Though I strive to educate myself and augment a brighter future for all marginalised groups, I recognise that I will inevitably make mistakes and I am ready to take responsibility and grow from my own missteps. I am dedicated to using the skills I have to contribute positively to this world, and particularly to support and nourish the rainbow community that has made me into the artsy agender activist I am proud to be today!