

GAYS AND LESBIANS

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United Way sticker says no to Boy Scout funds

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Searching for compromise on an explosive gay-rights controversy, the United Way campaign in Santa Cruz County has endorsed a plan that allows its largest group of donors to easily restrict funding to the Boy Scouts.

Bright orange stickers that state: "I choose not to donate to the Boy Scouts" will be included this year with all pledge forms handed out to employees of the University of California, Santa Cruz.

The stickers are voluntary. Placing one on a pledge card guarantees that a donor's contribution goes to all 44 charities served by United Way of Santa Cruz County — except the Boy Scouts.

The Boy Scouts organization has been criticized as discriminatory because admin-

istrators refuse to accept openly gay members and leaders. Some United Way organizations — including the San Francisco Bay Area chapter — have cut off funding to the Boy Scouts altogether, which has enraged other donors who support the Scouting policy.

Santa Cruz United Way officials said they hope the sticker experiment will encourage UC-Santa Cruz faculty and staff members to donate even though many are angry that the charity continues to fund local Boy Scout troops.

"The good thing is that it gives all donors complete choice in directing their gift," said Mary Lou Goeke, executive director of United Way of Santa Cruz County.

UC-Santa Cruz is the single largest con-

tributor to United Way of Santa Cruz County. Last year, faculty and staff members donated \$74,000 — more than any other campus in the UC system.

But a looming boycott over the Scout issue this year left United Way officials worried and many donors uneasy.

"Most of the groups that the United Way gives money to help poor people, disabled people and elderly people," said Linda Hooper, who serves on UC-Santa Cruz's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Community Concerns Committee. "We didn't want to hurt them."

The sticker idea is believed to be the first such attempt at compromise on the issue.

The experiment was approved in August at a meeting of local United Way officials,

UC-Santa Cruz administrators and gay activists.

Hooper and others who support the idea acknowledge it probably won't mean a reduction in the amount of money going to the Boy Scouts. Last year, United Way of Santa Cruz County collected \$1.1 million in contributions, most of which was unrestricted.

Even if every UC-Santa Cruz pledge card comes in with a sticker attached, United Way still will easily be able to draw on other contributions to award the Boy Scouts the \$36,900 the group received last year.

Nevertheless, Hooper said, she hopes others will adopt a similar strategy to send a message to United Way and national Boy Scout administrators.